

## REVIEW

# Company Benefits, Perks, and Their Advantages for Employees: A PRISMA Review

Belay Getachew Girma

International Leadership Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



**Correspondence to:** Belay Getachew Girma, International Leadership Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;  
E-mail: [Bgetachew04@gmail.com](mailto:Bgetachew04@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This study presents a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 protocol and indexed in the Scopus database. Adopting rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 36 publications spanning 2021 to 2025 were selected for analysis. Against the backdrop of volatile business environments and fluctuating consumer demand, organizations are urged to develop enhanced human capital strategies, as negligence in compensation design has been empirically linked to impaired business effectiveness and elevated employee turnover. At present, enterprises offering competitive benefits and perks hold a distinct competitive edge in sustaining market positioning and retaining skilled professional talent. Notwithstanding the growing scholarly attention to employee rewards, existing literature remains limited in empirical evidence regarding whether such benefits and perks are perceived as privileges by employees. To address this critical research gap, the present research synthesized over 30 peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly publications with time-series data from 2021 to 2025. The findings demonstrate that—with the exception of a small number of leading global firms—most organizations allocate insufficient attention to employee benefits and perks, thereby contributing to severe employee turnover and suboptimal organizational performance. Consequently, this paper advocates for large-scale, cross-national empirical investigations to validate whether employee benefits and perks qualify as privileges, and to examine how transparent compensation policies can generate broader organizational benefits.

**Keywords:** strategic human resource, competitive compensation management, valuable asset, fringe benefits

## 1 Introduction

In today's tough job market, employee benefits have changed from being something extra to something essential that companies must offer to attract and keep good workers. Providing strong benefits packages helps make employees happier and is very important for drawing in and keeping the best workers. An organization's most valuable strategic resource is its highly skilled, trained, and qualified workforce and employees, and in a progressively competitive environment, keeping skilled employees and high-performing talent is crucial for an organization's success (Zehra, 2025).

A competitive benefits package is crucial in today's employment market to draw in and keep top personnel. About 60% of respondents to Glassdoor's 2015 Employment Confidence Survey state that benefits and perks play a significant role in their decision to accept a job offer. According to Reyes (2024), benefits are a fantastic way to attract, develop, and retain workers since it is non-monetary awards in addition to standard monetary rewards, and these days, businesses are developing their own identities through intriguing and distinctive employee benefits. Google, for instance, is well known for its corporate culture.

Though scholarly interest to conduct studies in employee benefits have been high, getting specific total Scopus database counts for year 2021-2025 become a challenge, and finding quantitative studies on topic of this study also became a problem whereas a bibliometric analysis of 713 academic articles on the correlation between employee benefits and financial performance shows employee benefits are key drivers of financial results in companies. (Schawlowski, 2025). In line with this, based on quantitative studies, providing extra financial advantages in addition to salaries and wages establishes a positive association, and these benefits help employees feel more motivated and loyal to the company, which in turn leads to better performance and more efficient ways of making a profit (Jahan & Jabin, 2024). Employee benefits have also linked

to work engagement, a study conducted on employee compensation and benefits pre and post COVID-19 shows, the primary benefit that experienced significant impact is flexible working hours, which has now emerged as the most prevalent form of compensation and benefits, in conjunction with an increase in paid time-off alternatives (Shtembari et al., 2022).

In line with employee engagement, human capital is also crucial for long-term company growth in today's cutthroat business world. Wealth and capital by themselves are insufficient to capture the majority of the market and continuously establish a leadership position. Instead, Human capital management (HCM), which acknowledges that a company's workforce is its most valuable asset, is a cornerstone of modern business strategy. For example, Microsoft, Google, IBM, and the current automobile market have been leading the world market because they primarily care about their human capital. Effective management and development of human resources is essential for sustainable business growth and success, especially as firms navigate a more dynamic and competitive environment (Anusuya & Soundarapandian, 2024).

Besides, considering that workers spend at least 40 hours each week at their jobs, it should understandably that a company has to consider employee benefits, perks, and the establishment of positive work environments. In this context, strategic HRM practices must now concentrate more on developing benefit packages within a company policy since people are recognized as the most crucial factor in an organization's success (Umana et al., 2024).

In this regard, as Umana et al. (2024) stated along side an organization's recruitment and selection efforts, a comprehensive compensation plan ensures that workers are motivated to carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities and that they have to get competitive remuneration packages to attract and retain quality personnel. In this context, employee benefits are a more reliable method of improving workers' motivation and performance by fostering an atmosphere that encourages positive work behaviors, the benefits process entails to promote a positive and conducive work environment where employees able to use their skills and expertise to perform useful tasks for which they are valued. For instance, study show that workers who get better pay and more benefits tend to work harder and are more ready to do extra things for their companies. (Sethi & Tuteja, 2020).

Empirical study conducted on "The role of benefits in sustaining HRM outcomes" shows Perks that appear to rely on a person's rank within the organization, duration of employment, and other personal characteristics, yet are frequently provided, include a company vehicle, sponsored conferences, and reimbursed phone costs, thus one of the most important tasks of human resource (HR) experts would be to design a reward strategy that will motivate employees and achieve high organizational performance (Galetić & Klindi, 2020). In addition, a quantitative study conducted on The Effects of Fringe Benefits on Job Satisfaction shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between fringe benefits and job satisfaction (Vashistha & Khan, 2020). However, in real practice offering competitive compensation plans is one of the primary challenges that most businesses face in order to draw in and keep skilled and experienced workers (Mulligan & Finkelstein, 2007).

In order to fill the research gaps on the benefits and perks packages offered by employers and determine whether or not they are regarded as an advantage, the study was conducted as a full and thorough review of the pertinent literature. This makes the study different from earlier research in that it contributes to the field by highlighting how benefits and perks are considered an advantage for employees.

## 2 Purpose of the Study

As companies keep growing and becoming more international, every facet of business has gotten more intricate and difficult for organizations to stay competitive in a global market place (Mulligan & Finkelstein, 2007). Thus, companies introduce different compensation strategies as fringe benefits enhance the salaries and wages of the workforce, including items such as a company vehicle, medical insurance, social security contributions, paid time off, sick leave, meals, housing allowances, discounts for employees, and more (Vashistha & Khan, 2020).

Although in recent years, employee perks have become a hot topic in most businesses (Agubata et al., 2022), employees' desire to change jobs is highly increasing primarily due to their desire for a better benefits packages rather than just seeking for a higher salary or wages. However, a review of the literature reveals that there has not been enough research done on the reasons why workers are actively looking for better perks and benefits packages from companies. In addition, research conducted thus far has not been able to determine whether or not businesses that offer benefits and perks to their employees may be interpreted as granting them privileges,

and the benefits and perks compensation that would be offered in addition to salaries and wages also remain an under researched area (Li, 2023).

A bibliometric analysis of 713 published articles showed that employee benefits represent an important yet often underexplored factor that can influence corporate profitability (Schawlowski, 2025). Even if, many researches have been carried out with regard to employee benefits, compensation, employee and company performance, in practice there is lack of research data specifically on the research topic Company benefits and perks, and there advantage for employees.

Thus, this research aims to address these identified gaps by examining if the offerings of employee benefits and perks by companies are perceived as an advantage for employees. To achieve this, a comprehensive review of pertinent studies was carried out.

### 3 Literature Review

Nowadays, employees-who are an organization's most valuable asset, frequently worry about benefits and perks that employers provide. It recognizes that these issues are becoming more prevalent due to uncertain economic condition of the world and the individual living expenses incurring at the household levels. Workers who are enthusiastic about their roles strive to exceed expectations and excel in their work. Providing additional perks such as paid time off, medical coverage, a company car, stock options, and so on is one approach to enhance employee productivity, and it will help maintain employee engagement and reduce occurrences of dissatisfied personnel (Acheampong et al., 2024). Thus throughout the 20th century, companies enhanced employees' economic stability by offering benefits alongside direct pay in return for their work (Dulebohn et al., 2009).

Providing benefits and perks are also linked to employee motivation, and as scholars pointed out, there are two types of motivation, which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that affect for employee performance and organization success. According to Legault (2016), engaging in activities that are intrinsically rewarding or enjoyable is a sign of intrinsic motivation. In Ghana, for instance, ways to boost employee's intrinsic motivation to boost productivity include praising achievement, encouraging creativity, and involving all staff members involved in brainstorm problems that impact organizations (Ibrahim & Brobbey, 2015). Conversely, extrinsic motivation refers to actions that are essentially reliant on achieving a goal that is separate from the normal activity itself (Legault, 2016).

Thus, there are insufficient studies on benefits and perks programs that truly qualify as privileges or advantages that offered by employers, despite the literature's emphasis on the importance of incentive for an organization's success and employee productivity.

#### 3.1 Conceptual ideas about benefits & perks

Good employee relations are crucial to a company's performance because they are sustained when financial incentives are linked to each task and job that an employee completes more effectively and contributes to the success of the company.

Though benefits for employees have been referred as a necessary and adequate working condition, it is imperative for the administration of an enterprise to acknowledge the significance of employee benefits, which constitute the various non-monetary compensations provided to employees in addition to their remuneration or salary. In the contemporary competitive landscape, organizations of varying sizes, technological proficiencies, and market orientations are endeavouring to retain their most talented personnel. A robust and affirmative relationship between workers and their employers is essential to navigate these challenges effectively. Employees ought to be motivated to perform at their highest potential by offering them compelling incentives such as performance bonuses (Sethi & Tuteja, 2020).

According to researchers, fringe benefits are non-monetary, indirect advantages given by companies to recognize and reward the hard work of employees. This is because offering benefits is essential for both employee performance and organizational success (Doll & Choudhary, 2025). Employers also provide company perks to employees as these are essential for keeping productivity and performance high (Mehra, 2024). To this context, according to Mercer Talent All Access (2021), automobile benefits have historically constituted a significant component of the compensation packages for executives and managerial personnel. Originating in the 1960s, these incentives have served as a compelling mechanism for attracting and retaining talent, evolving into an essential privilege for employees globally.

In line with this, the 2018 CIPD Reward Management survey shows many employee perks have been in use. From traditional benefits such as a staff canteen, a company car, a season ticket travel loan or a Christmas party, to new ones such as nap rooms, paid leave to adopt a pet, fertility treatment or allowing employees to take as many paid days off as they want. Though these perks create direct and hidden costs, employers must know these costs as a company, and they need to weigh them against gains for the company. Though there has been scarcity of research, employers should ask one key question; which perks build and maintain a workplace that boosts employee engagement and performance, and which ones help the business reach its goals? (CIPD, 2018). This research gaps would be a good opportunity for academicians to conduct an in-depth study of the these issues.

Even if awareness of employee benefits has grown, few studies closely examine how these benefits affect key performance measures in organizations (Li, 2023). For instance, during the 20th century, employers increased the economic security of employees by providing, in exchange for labor, benefits in addition to direct compensation (Dulebohn et al., 2009). Besides, there is still a growing need to find greater fulfillment in addition to the minimal compensation or income that an employee receives after working a specific number of hours per week; this demand may be satisfied by gaining extra benefits or advantages from employers. (Mehra, 2024).

### 3.2 Types of benefits & perks

In general, employee benefits are considered as a component of the overall remuneration package provided to employees, either in full or in instalments over time, in addition to their salaries. Employees receive these benefits and compensation in addition to their pay, and retirement benefits, education funds, insurance, vacation, and sick leave might all be included in them (Siyal & Garavan, 2020).

A significant portion of an organization's employment agreement has been reached for employee benefits, which may also be used to set one company apart from another. The four main traditional perks for employees are medical allowance, life insurance, disability insurance, and retirement plans. It also encompasses unconventional components such as time off from work, wellness, flexible work arrangements, pension and savings plans, and salaries, wages, and bonuses, all of which are included in the total remuneration of employees and thus taken into account the entire package of each (Gabriel et al., 2021).

The term "employee benefits" encompasses employment perks like insurance (medical, dental, and life), stock options, and cell phone plans, with another insight, the benefits of employment may include anything from training opportunities to beginning bonuses (Reyes, 2024).

Employee benefits are considered to be a component of total remuneration provided to workers in addition to their wages, whether in a single payment or in instalments over time. Employees get these benefits and compensations in addition to their wage. Insurance, educational financing, retirement benefits, vacation, and sick days are all potential forms (Siyal & Garavan, 2020). In addition to a set wage, perks are supplementary advantages given by the employer to the workforce and can be either tangible or intangible (Mehra, 2024).

In generally, employee compensation (benefits & perks) shall be defined as any non-salary increase attributable to an employee's performance, whether requested or provided by the employer (Reyes, 2024).

### 3.3 Use of benefits & perks for organization success

The business environment is inherently dynamic, and in order to thrive in such a turbulent market, firms must concentrate on their strengths in order to turn them into a competitive edge (Raman & Kumari, 2022). Studies also show that employee satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance are all significantly influenced by employee motivation, and few firms actually prioritize work satisfaction because they are unaware of the incredible opportunity that lies ahead of them. In this regard, unquestionably, contented workers are more innovative, effective, and devoted to their companies (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2022).

The fact that studies have demonstrated for a link between employee job performance and corporate performance which is manifested by the growing interest in employee performance (Bakotić, 2016), it is quite likely perceived that a company's overall performance is positively impacted by the performance of its workforce (Acheampong et al., 2024).

Hence, a company's workforce and staff are its most valuable strategic resource because they

are highly trained, competent, and skilled, and retaining seasoned personnel and high talent is essential to the success of any business in today's increasingly competitive environment (Zehra, 2025).

For example, studies have shown that unhappy workers are four times more likely to quit their jobs than happy ones (Schooley, 2023). By giving employees more control over their schedules via flexible work arrangements or scheduling, a corporation that offers work-life balance may help them better handle stress (Kratz, 2022). Thus, one of the most important factors in maintaining competitiveness in the labor market is the consequences of choices regarding employee benefits, in this regard, as Dulebohn (2009) stated, indirect compensation or benefits are a major component in recruiting and retaining employees when considering total compensation.

### 3.4 Benefits & perks for employee productivity

Employees are more likely to be happy and engaged in their position within the company if they believe that their employers value their health and well-being (Iqbal, 2021). The benefits and rewards offered by the company are what entice many individuals to seek employment. A worker's happiness at work is directly related to how satisfied they are with their employment, and disregarding employee happiness will ultimately lead to a decrease in commitment. Consequently, there is a deficiency in motivation, effectiveness, and ultimately output (Reyes, 2024).

According to Peemaneet et al. (2025), benefits for employees are crucial in determining workplace results, particularly when it comes to retaining talent; employee benefits play a key role in determining job satisfaction and employee retention. These benefits, which were once thought of as supplemental to pay, have developed into crucial elements of human resource strategy that affect workers' choices to join, remain with, or depart a company. Benefits at today's workplaces go beyond simple cash assistance and include retirement plans, flexible work schedules, mental health programs, career development opportunities, and healthcare. Businesses that provide extensive and creative benefits packages have a strategic edge in luring and keeping top talent in the face of growing competition (Desai & Jadav, 2025).

Though perks are popular, it has to more valued and to be provided for the hard work and managerial skill to lead a company or organizations. Perks or perquisites, as nonpecuniary compensation is mostly a reward or an offer to be provided for managers in the form of company cars, club memberships, corporate aircraft, legal costs, financial services, security, and relocation advantages, whereas cash salary, bonuses, equity, and options are categorized as pecuniary remuneration, or simply wage (Qiu et al., 2025).

### 3.5 Companies policy for benefits & perks

Human Resource Management (HRM) makes extensive use of employee benefits as a crucial tool, and employees place a high premium on benefits and other monetary rewards (Gabriel et al., 2021). The staff within the a company serve as a backbone for meeting the constantly shifting needs of customers and are essential for organizations to carry out their objective and vision (Verma et al., 2021). In this regard, one approach to enhancing employee allegiance is to promote active participation among staff members (Hermawan et al., 2020).

Research shows that a positive work atmosphere is critical for ensuring employee success and avoiding excessive stress, which can have a detrimental impact on job performance. Several characteristics of the workplace influence job satisfaction and employee performance (Reyes, 2024). In addition to that, worker productivity increases as a result of higher worker engagement (Eldor, 2016). Due to this now a days, the concept of worker engagement has dominated lots of the Human resources (HR) notion (Acheampong et al., 2024).

### 3.6 Practical implication of benefits & perks in the organization

Human capital acts as a vital resource since it highly enables for organizational to shape performance (Alfaraby & Sinambela, 2025). Strategy literature often stresses human capital's role in competitive advantage, and this view shifts the focus of competitive strategy, and the balance moves from external industry position to internal resources as these resources prove key to lasting organizational success (NguyenVan et al., 2023).

Since human capital has been considered crucial for success of an organization, it is well perceived that motivated workers show more energy, and these employees gladly take to engage on productive tasks, and they stick to good habits to boost their work results as strong

performance comes from their steady effort on duties (Reyes, 2024). Decisions on employee benefits help companies compete best for workers. These benefits add to total pay as non-cash rewards, and employers and workers view them as more important than ever (Dulebohn et al., 2009).

In line with this, research reveals that organizational control in the context of wellness initiatives and discovered that material rewards are more effective than monetary ones at raising worker productivity (Heninger et al., 2019). Besides, research also showed employee commitment and workplace engagement are stronger in companies that provide comprehensive benefits packages. It was also recognized that workers who had access to high-quality healthcare and were able to maintain a work-life balance through flexible scheduling expressed greater organizational engagement and morale (Desai & Jadav, 2025). Besides, employee performance is greatly impacted by the workplace, either in a positive or negative way (Reyes, 2024). More so, growing numbers of studies have indicated that employee benefits on job satisfaction and workforce performance are crucial for organizational success (Li, 2023).

### 3.7 Empirical assessment of employee benefits and perks

Employee benefits have become a fundamental component of human resource strategies in modern organizations, and some organizations have set on the organization structure and recruit as a HR Manager on compensation & benefits (perks and benefits) since employees play a crucial role on enhancing productivity and leads to organization success.

In the past, people viewed benefits as extras to salary; however, presently they rank as core parts of HR plans. Workplaces today offer benefits far beyond basic cash aid, and these cover health care, career growth paths, mental health support, flexible schedules, and retirement savings since rivalry for skilled workers keeps growing. Firms with full and fresh benefits packages hold a real edge as they draw in and keep top talent (Desai & Jadav, 2025).

For instance, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in USA, benefits accounted for 32% of total employer compensation costs, and this year's report shows that, "attracting and retaining talent" is now the top goal of the global benefits strategy, followed by "enhancing employee engagement." (Thomsons, 2018/2019).

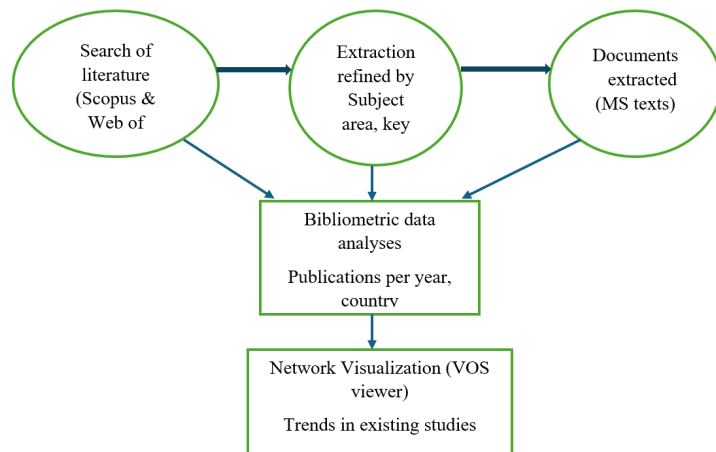
In this regard, it would be vital to consider the Herzberg's two-factor theory views in which employee benefits as a key in full work condition. Many parts of these benefits fit under hygiene factors in old views though recent studies show extrinsic factors, or hygiene factors, also shape job satisfaction (Li, 2023). Even if research has identified the effect of intrinsic motivation on employee performance, the effect of extrinsic motivation (fringe benefits and remuneration) is not well understood by researchers (Shahzadi et al., 2014). Yet HRM literature gives little notice of using benefits and perks, in reality organizations value employee benefits highly though in practice it lacks commitment (Dulebohn et al., 2009).

For instance, according to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in March 2025, 72 percent of private industry workers had retirement benefits and 70 percent of those workers have access to defined contribution plans (Department of Labor, 2025). Google also offers all its employees medical insurance which is customisable in nature to cover medical fees for employees, their spouses, or any dependents, additionally gives extra perks such as access to gyms or gym memberships (Mehra, 2024). It is also imperative that company leaders ought to offer improved pay and perks. This can not only boost worker motivation and their connection to the company, but it can also act as a beneficial factor for earnings from professional services and the volume of cases assigned to a firm (Lee, 2023).

## 4 Methodology

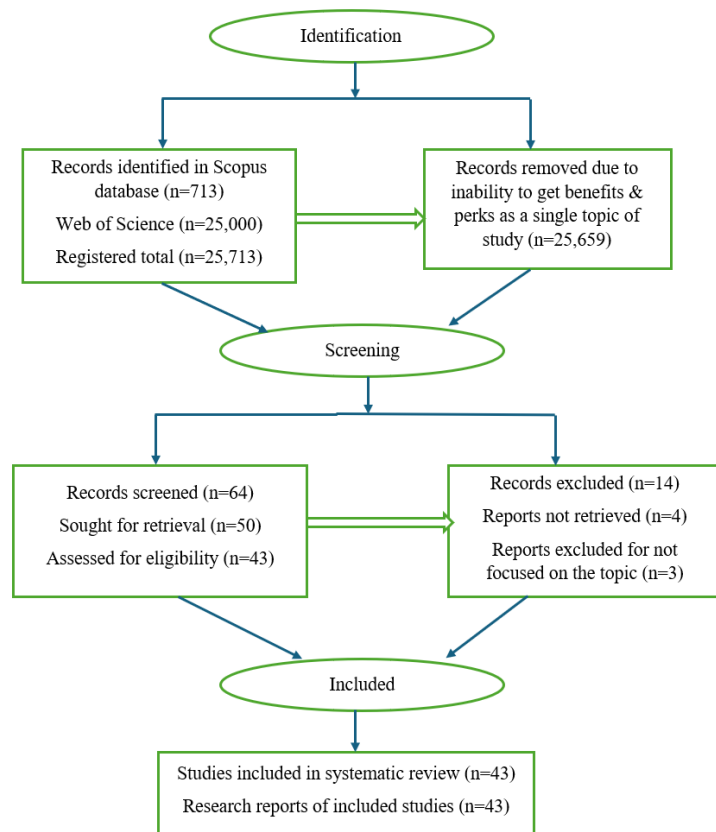
In using PRISMA 2020 guidelines, a systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted on searching keywords on "Employee Benefits & Perks" in the Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) database as a methodological approach, which used to identify, select, evaluate, and synthesize the research findings that uses to address specific research topic, and it followed an explicit, transparent, and replicable protocol to minimize bias or error in the selection process and interpretation of the results (Williams et al., 2021). (see Figure 1)

Though the generic database for Scopus shows over 713 and more than 25,000 Web of Science (WOS) articles indexed separately for employee benefits, fringe benefits, compensation structure and perks, to minimize biases, the study confined most recent 5 years data's (2021-2025), and a three-phases approach pursued to select and evaluate the most legitimate and



**Figure 1** Bibliometric analysis

reliable items. Using this methods, in the first stage, 713 records of Scopus database and 25,000 Web of Science (WOS) data’s identified both in benefits & perks, and hence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of screening 64 records screened and out of this 43 records were eligible to assess while 21 records were removed, excluded and not retrieved due to not addressing the research topic. (see [Figure 2](#))



**Figure 2** PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews of search databases

Based on the systematic review of those 43 published peer- reviewed journal articles, books and conference papers, the study would be able to systematically analysed and synthesised theories with empirical data’s to come up with whether the present issues of benefits and perks would be considered as privileges or not. Hence, the researcher would be able to analyze and critically evaluate benefits and perks from the perspective of employers and employees. The study’s conclusions will also use to pinpoint research gaps and indicate a future research direction.

## 5 Research Finding

Though employees are presently looking for better benefits and perks packages, recent research demonstrates that developing the compensation structure schemes or benefits packages is disregarded in many companies or organizations. In light of this, the research findings indicate that there are numerous policy gaps in the companies' provision of traditional benefit packages, such as the availability of company cars, health insurance, disability insurance, and retirement benefits. Additionally, the companies have paid few attentions to providing perks, such as profit sharing, medical allowance, life insurance, retirement plans, and career growth paths.

It also revealed that, even if the majority of organizations strive for success and long-term market advancement, the human resource policy of hiring and keeping competent, talented, and professional employees or managers is inadequate. Despite companies considered that offering employee benefits and perks comes at a cost, the finding showed that providing employee benefits schemes, such as the allocation of vehicles, medical allowance, life insurance, disability insurance, and retirement plans particularly to managerial and professional staff, is a common practice among esteemed organizations. The review of this study also proved that automobile benefits shall be included in comprehensive remuneration packages for senior executives and managers as it contributes for organization success.

Hence, this research deficiency will contribute in future for academicians to investigate an empirical study in the field.

## 6 Discussion & Conclusion

The study discovered that organizations often lack adequate compensation programs and policies in their human capital management, which would lead to high employee turnover and poor organizational performance. This is true even though benefits are essential for enhancing individual employee performance and organizational efficiencies (Gabriel et al., 2021). Research findings also demonstrate that material rewards are more effective than monetary ones at raising worker productivity (Heninger et al., 2019).

Considering that a company's success depends on its human capital, it is unobscured that some firms all over the world are striving to implement successful human capital strategies that will benefit them and keep talented and skilled workers. Their inability to identify or provide benefits and perks leads to costs and a hindrance toward implementing talent acquisition techniques that would be beneficial to both the business and the organization. In addition, very few businesses truly value work satisfaction, as they are unaware of the tremendous potential that lies ahead of them in providing employee benefits and perks (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2022).

In contrast, study showed that providing outstanding benefit packages and perks within their talent acquisition strategies have contributed to their market dominance and sustain in the business, as contented workers are more innovative, effective, and devoted to their companies (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2022).

Hence, let alone realizing that offering perks and benefits is a competitive advantage for an organization's success, there are significant gaps in organizational compensation policies, such as not even offering the traditional benefit packages, like a company car, medical allowances, life insurance, disability insurance and retirement plan, which are helpful for employee retention and contribute to the success of the business. Studies, for example, have revealed that miserable employees are four times more prone to leave their jobs compared to contented ones (Schooley, 2023).

To conclude, this research has been so vital in the present challenges of availing competitive compensation schemes for employees, and the research finding demonstrates that benefits and perks offered by employers would not be viewed as an advantage; rather, they should be used as a motivating tool to raise employee engagement, boost performance, and achieve organizational success. However, because of the current lack of awareness and inadequate organizational commitment to implement sufficient benefits and perks packages, businesses are finding it extremely difficult to retain competent and skilled professionals. This leads to a high employee turnover rate, which in turn results in increased costs and poor organizational performance.

Since the study conducted was a systematic review of existing literature, one of the significant limitations of this research is that the data collected are of a longitudinal type only, and to address this gap, conducting cross-sectional studies could help to determine causality.

As a future direction, researcher suggests that empirical and case studies should be carried out to further investigate the knowledge and research gap about whether or not providing benefits and perks as an advantage for employees, as well as its effects on employee productivity and company success.

## Ethical Statement

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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