

Comparison Of Pay Systems Linked To Individual And Collective Performance: Literature Review and Future Perspectives

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Abstract. The key to optimize resource allocation in enterprises is the management of compensation and performance. With the arrival of the digital economy, different industries have optimized and innovated human resource management to varying degrees, and compensation and performance are directly linked to employee work results. The debate on whether performance-related pay can improve organizational performance has been focused on individual performance-based pay systems, which generate differential incentives for individual performance through different pay systems. In this paper, a comparative study is conducted with collective performance-based pay systems (e.g., team bonuses and profit sharing) through a systematic literature review approach. On this basis, this review contributes to our understanding of categorization effects and free-riding under collective performance-based pay systems and whether financial incentives undermine intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: Pay for performance; Collective incentives; Organizational performance; Individual performance.

1. Introduction

Realizing common prosperity is the ideal goal pursued by socialism with Chinese characteristics, and with the successful achievement of the goal of comprehensive well-off, China has stepped into a new stage of historical development, and the basic guideline of "prioritizing efficiency and taking into account fairness" of the social distribution of wealth has gradually entered into people's hearts and played an important role in China's long-term and sustainable development of the economy[1]. However, the bipolar trend of wealth distribution makes the problem of social distribution and fairness increasingly prominent, and this distribution difference is often reflected in different regions, different industries, different levels of income inequality [2]. Excessive pay gap in the enterprise will affect employee motivation and output efficiency, thus affecting enterprise performance [3]. This effect may develop into social life, increasing the sense of unfairness among group members, which in turn leads to social conflicts. Therefore, the enterprise's compensation system is one of the fundamentals of enterprise development.

The purpose of the review is to assess which performance-related pay system has been found to have a greater positive impact on organizational and individual performance in studies comparing collective and individual performance-based approaches. Second, the review assesses how much more previous research has shed light on the long-standing controversies related to the issue of performance-related pay and the reasons behind any performance differences. Of particular importance is whether performance-related pay leads to: a) an emphasis on production quantity or speed over product quality; b) employees limiting output, e.g., through gaming behavior; and c) a reduction in workers' intrinsic motivation.

The contributions of the article are as follows: first, by combing through the relevant literature, it systematically describes the differential effects of different pay-for-performance systems on organizational performance, which facilitates subsequent scholars' understanding of pay-for-performance for more in-depth research; second, it introduces the key factors related to pay-for-

performance that may reduce its effectiveness, as well as the ensuing discussion; and lastly, the present review summarizes pay-for-performance theories, as well as presenting future perspectives.

2. Overview Of The Performance-Pay Relationship

2.1. Concepts

Performance appraisal is in a certain work period, the employee's work performance to conduct a comprehensive assessment and evaluation process, through the objective and timely and reasonable assessment, you can affirm the employee's work performance in a timely manner, so that the employee to further stimulate the enthusiasm for work. Performance appraisal is an important way for the development of business organizations, is an important means of achieving corporate goals. Performance appraisal needs to have a strict and scientific appraisal system; the appraisal process should be adhering to the principle of fairness and standardization. Appraisal results are employees to improve the work, the enterprise to improve the management of information feedback. Performance appraisal and salary management are inseparable. Qualified performance appraisal results can objectively reflect the merits and demerits of employee performance, but also for the construction of the compensation system to provide important data support. To sum up, performance appraisal is a process of systematic evaluation of employees' work performance, aiming at motivating employees, improving management and realizing corporate goals [4].

Compensation management refers to the process of measuring and reporting on employees' efforts based on strategic development objectives of an enterprise, and the management process includes the policy, system and system construction of compensation. The management process includes compensation policy and system construction. Compensation management runs through the whole process from the time an employee enters an enterprise to the time he leaves it, covering short-term incentives such as basic salary, allowances and subsidies, bonuses, and long-term incentives such as employees' stock options and medium- and long-term incentive plans. Scientific and reasonable compensation management is crucial to the development of both the employees and the enterprise [5].

2.2. Relationship

The relationship between performance appraisal and salary management is inseparable. First, reasonable performance appraisal can provide a strong basis for perfecting compensation management. Performance appraisal can assess the performance and contribution of employees, and enterprises can adopt differentiated pay incentives according to the appraisal results and design a new pay system with clear incentives and strong competitiveness. Secondly, scientific compensation management can also promote performance appraisal, employees will take the initiative to improve work efficiency and performance to obtain higher pay returns. This also provides evaluation materials for performance appraisal. At the specific operational level, the performance appraisal and compensation management of enterprises should be complementary and mutually based. The evaluation results of employee performance provided by performance appraisal are the basis for designing the compensation system. Compensation settings should be differentiated according to the appraisal results to achieve the purpose of distinguishing between significant contributors and ordinary contributors. At the same time, performance appraisal should also consider the impact of pay incentives on employee performance and assess whether pay incentives are effective. Scientific and effective implementation of performance appraisal and compensation management can achieve the purpose of enhancing employee motivation, retaining talents and promoting enterprise development.

2.3. Pay-For-Performance Presentation

Performance appraisal evaluates an employee's performance and contribution, based on which an organization can design a differentiated compensation system. Common forms of appraisal-linked

compensation include: performance bonuses, which are a system of incentives based on an employee's job performance, and whose amount is usually based on the performance goals achieved by an individual or team during a specific assessment period. This bonus system is designed to encourage employees to improve the efficiency and quality of their work, recognizing their contribution to the organization's goals by giving them an additional financial reward [6]. For organizations, performance bonuses not only motivate employees to do a better job, but also help attract and retain the best talent, and increase employee job satisfaction and loyalty. In this way, companies can achieve their business goals more effectively and foster a results-oriented corporate culture where employees with outstanding performance can receive higher rewards; core employee equity plan, which grants stock options to the management team or technical core staff with outstanding performance; promotional salary for management trainees, which grants different levels of promotional salary based on the assessment at the end of the training period; and overseas training incentives, which provide overseas training opportunities as a reward for outstanding performance. These forms of appraisal-linked compensation can make employees feel rewarded for outstanding performance, and thus take the initiative to improve work efficiency and performance.

3. The Need To Compare Individual And Collective PFP

3.1. Questioning The Validity

The reasoning behind performance-related pay systems is akin to classical economic theory-that workers are motivated to maximize income and employers to maximize profits. The incentive effect of the system produces the maximum effort and output relative to a given wage. The principle is that there is a clear relationship between effort and reward, a relationship that can be described as “task work”. There is little in the theory to suggest whether individual or collective schemes will be more effective. However, the theory implies that tasks can be clearly defined, and that products are akin to the hypothetical unit of production in economics, the widget. It thus most readily applies to piecework and payment-by-results systems.

Debate about performance-related pay has centered on individual forms and the factors that detract from its efficacy, which are most commonly seen as: a) quality of output may be impaired by focusing on the quantity and speed of production; b) workers may deliberately restrict output, gaming the system or forsaking income in favor of lower effort, and c) workers' intrinsic motivation may be reduced, meaning its associated performance benefits may not materialize.

The purpose of comparing individual and collective performance pay is to find the best balance, so that the enterprise's compensation system can both motivate individual hard work and promote teamwork, thus achieving the overall goals of the organization. This is not only an effective way to improve internal efficiency and employee satisfaction, but also a strategic choice for enterprises to realize long-term development. In the specific implementation process, enterprises need to flexibly adjust and optimize the performance pay system according to their own industry characteristics, corporate culture and development stage, to ensure its scientific and fairness. Therefore, the reasons for comparing individual and collective performance mainly include the following:

Firstly, the use of collective performance pay systems has increased over the last decade according to relevant data. Companies in the UK and the US have generally adopted pay systems linked to collective performance [7]. Second, past assessments of pay-for-performance systems have typically focused on one side only, generally pay systems linked to individual performance, and some scholars have even failed to distinguish between the two types, treating them as homogeneous [8]. Garbers & Konradt based on an analysis of 30 studies, found that collective performance pays systems have a greater positive impact on employee performance than individual incentives [9]. Third, past research on pay-for-performance systems, while addressing their positive aspects, has focused more on concerns about their effectiveness. These concerns include, but are not limited to, increasing the quantity of output at the expense of quality or other outcomes and directing employees to limit their efforts or reduce the realization of their autonomous needs, thereby reducing the positive impact of

intrinsic motivation on performance [10]. Finally, a comparison of forms of performance-related pay is relevant to wider concerns within management and economics. It is particularly relevant within management in the light of advocacy of the high-performance work system as the optimal management approach in the increasingly dynamic and competitive global economy. For the high-performance work systems approach to be anything other than a tautology, it must be defined by a preformed set of practices, the extent of their adoption being the determinant of performance. If the concept is to make sense, practices must be assumed to be best-in-class, each practice playing a unique role that is not replicated by others [11].

3.2. Sorting And Incentive Effects Of Pay-For-Performance

Agency theory emphasizes the potential loss of productivity that can occur when the interests of owners and employees are not fully aligned. Pay-for-performance (PFP) has been proposed as a potential solution to this problem [12]. The effect that exists behind pay-for-performance is that it not only motivates people to increase their efforts, but it may also affect the overall performance of the organization by influencing the composition of the workforce, which is also known as the sorting effect. Performance-related pay suggests that top performers will be rewarded and individuals will be judged on their performance, therefore, organizations that offer this type of pay will be attractive to top performers and ultimately have a better pool of human capital [13]. In the extreme case where the sorting effect adequately explains performance improvement, a performance-related pay system is like an efficiency pay system, reflecting the elite, achievement-oriented culture it creates.

The sorting effect concept seems to focus on how individual performance-related pay and its use attracts and retains high-performing employees. Nonetheless, one might argue-and indeed Kato & Kauhanen do-that the sorting effect of collective pay systems means that high-performing employees leave the organization "to avoid free-riding". high performers leave the organization to avoid free-riding [14], while low performers stay because the system gives them the 'opportunity to free-rider'. Nonetheless, Kato & Kauhanen add the caveat that if free-riding can be reduced, the migration of high-performing employees may not occur [15].

However, empirical assessments of the sorting effect come from turnover measures rather than the attractiveness of performance-related pay systems. Little is known about possible sorting effects in collective schemes. Some studies suggest that employees are less likely to leave the firm under collective systems, especially profit sharing. These systems are more attractive to potential employees; this leads to better employees and greater motivation, which in turn leads to higher collective performance. Considering that either individual or collective systems have the potential to influence the composition of the workforce, the implication of our overview of performance-related areas is that we need to respond to the call to pay more attention than ever to the sorting effects of pay systems [16].

4. Overview Of The Research Methodology

The bibliographic databases used were Elsevier's Acopus, EBSCO's Business Source Premier, and Google Scholar. The search terms used were: "performance-related pay", "performance-related pay and performance", "incentives and performance", "individual and collective incentives", "individual or collective performance-related pay", "comparing individual and collective performance-related pay" and "contingency pay". No publication date was specified. The search was completed in April 2022. In addition to using search engines, we used the citations in papers found through them and in papers included in prior reviews. We also examined specific journals with a high impact factor in the management area, for example: Journal of Management, Labour Economics, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology and Academy of Management Journal.

This review collects relevant dissertation literature, but noting that the vast majority do not directly compare the effects of the two pay-for-performance systems and that most of the studies originate in the U.S. Table 1 summarizes the relevant study designs and findings. The studies were either at the

individual level-involving employee or student participants - or at the organizational level-usually a company or business unit. Reward systems varied across studies, with piecework or individual bonuses dominating individual incentives, team or team-based incentives and organization-wide schemes consisting mainly of profit sharing and employee share ownership. The scope of performance measurement varies greatly across organizations, industries, and positions because of differences in organizational culture and values, industry characteristics, position requirements, and performance reward systems. Based on Table 1 we can see that the approaches taken by different studies for performance measurement are different.

Table 1. Summary of research design and results of studies.

Authors	Comparison	Research Design	Performance Measure(s)	Optimal Pay System
1 Aakvik, Hansen, & Torsvik (2017)	Individual incentives and team bonus	Longitudinal Field	Individual and team sales defined as the number of units sold per logged work hour visits to library and gym	Collective (unable to distinguish pure team effect from hybrid effect) Collective (team effect in hybrid isolated)
2 De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, & Van Hootehem (2018)	Individual performance-related pay, collective performance-related pay, hybrid, no performance-related pay	Cross-sectional Employee survey	Innovative work behavior	Collective
3 Gjedren & Kvaly (2020)	Individual piece rate, team incentives	Cross-sectional Experiment	Tasks solved correctly	Contingent
4 Freeman, Pan, Yang, & Ye (2022)	Individual piece rate, winner-takes-all tournament, equal sharing	Cross-sectional Experiment	Sliders correctly positioned in a computer-based task	Collective (equal sharing)
5 Kato & Kauhanen (2018)	Individual incentives and group incentives	Longitudinal Field	Enterprise productivity	Collective Differs between outcomes
6 Klindzic & Galetic (2020)	Profit-sharing, hybrid (of subjectively assessed individual bonus, employee share ownership plan, stock options)	Cross-sectional Field	Productivity, profitability, quality of products or services, innovativeness	Collective related to productivity and profitability Hybrid related to quality of products or services and innovativeness

5. Research Findings

5.1. Questioning The Validity

5.1.1. Positive results

Pay-for-performance can be used as a powerful motivational system that can effectively enhance job satisfaction and in-role performance [17], motivate employees to put more effort into their work tasks, increase productivity, and thus improve the performance of the organization. The findings of Kuvaas et al. [18] further support the idea that employees view job performance as the allocation of financial rewards as a reasonable criterion. As a result, significant differences in pay enhance

employee motivation in companies that implement pay-for-performance systems. Sundström states that pay-for-performance can be used as an effective anti-corruption tool to reduce corrupt behavior in the civil service [19]. Ledić showed that pay-for-performance produces higher job satisfaction and subjective well-being among workers. Whether using individual, group or company performance pay programs, employees who used variable pay systems were more satisfied with their jobs than those who used fixed pay [20].

5.1.2. Negative results

A high-performance pay system may lead the organization to focus excessively on employees' individual outcomes to achieve high performance, even at the risk of ignoring other task behaviors, which in turn can create hidden costs for the company's performance plan. Excessive focus on achieving individual work goals may be detrimental to individual participation in team activities and reduce the amount of effort individuals put into their teams. Fang suggests that the uncertainty created by performance pay programs needs to be taken seriously. There is uncertainty as to whether employees have control over job performance [21]. If employees believe that they can control their job performance, then they will see performance pay as an opportunity; on the contrary, if employees believe that they cannot control their job performance, then they will see performance pay as a threat. Employees' lack of control over job performance is one of the most important factors affecting employees' physical and mental health. In addition, pay differences resulting from pay-for-performance programs may trigger negative interpersonal problems (e.g., jealousy), which can affect employee morale. Zhao et al. confirmed based on a stress interaction model that pay-for-performance systems increase employee performance stress, and employees who perceive more stress will be more likely to engage in unethical behavior [22]. Liu and Ying et al. found that the performance pressure generated by pay-for-performance would foster the conformist behavior of subordinates. Studies have also confirmed that performance pay leads to interpersonal deviant behaviors and reduced helping and cooperative behaviors [23].

5.1.3. Double-edged sword effect

Yang Tao et al. examined the effect of performance pay on creativity using data from up- and down-matching. The results showed that performance pay had a significant inverted U-shaped effect on creativity [24]. Someone finds that performance pay significantly and positively predicted exploitative innovative behavior, while it showed an inverted U-shaped relationship on exploratory innovative behavior, in other words, when the level of performance pay exceeded a specific intensity, it would have an inhibitory effect on exploratory innovative behavior.

5.2. Comparison Of The Effectiveness Of Individual And Collective Performance-Related Pay Systems

A systematic review conducted in the University of Leicester School of Business revealed that collective performance-related pay systems such as profit-sharing and team bonuses have a bigger impact on organizational performance than their individual counterparts such as piece rate and sales bonuses. Systems which combine both may also more effective than when individual performance-related pay is used alone. In a similar differentiation, it is hybrid systems that lead to faster performance, at the cost of reduced accuracy. Klind & Galeti'c, in their study of private sector firms in Croatia, found that collective systems were associated with higher levels of productivity and profitability, but that hybrid systems had more effect on both innovation and product quality. Additionally, Pendleton & Robinson, in a longitudinal experiment, found that a hybrid system comprising team bonus plus high individual tournament leads to high effort levels, but a different type of hybrid, team bonus plus low individual tournament, was most closely related to cooperation, although this is not a performance measure [25].

The diverse type of performance measures means that it is difficult to compare different types of studies, but in the results of field studies, the results of studies using qualitative and quantitative indicators, or financial indicators such as sales and profits, versus non-financial indicators such as

product quality, the number of complaints, and customer satisfaction, as well as in laboratory experiments. There was no significant difference between the scores for task completion.

Of the two agent-based modeling studies, one concluded in favor of a collective system, while the other found better performance under flat rate payments. We can then suggest with certainty that individual pay systems are unlikely to be optimal. However, we cannot definitively conclude in favor of collective systems because 64% of the studies that considered hybrid systems found that they produced greater performance impacts than either collective or individual systems used alone. In addition, they performed best in the half of the rare cases where flat rate systems were included in the analysis. The prevalence of chance effects in the few studies that tested or had effects also limits the extent to which we can decisively conclude that collective systems are superior in all cases. Nonetheless, the discussion of the results on the effects of collective systems in the paper provides compelling reasons for why collective systems work, which focus on their positive impact on collective processes and workplace cooperation. Various mechanisms are mentioned, including idea generation and sharing, helping behaviors, improved work methods, and goal interdependence [26].

5.3. Comparison Of Hybrid Systems With Individual Or Collective Pay-For-Performance Systems Used Separately

Only a few of the previous studies on pay for performance have found that mixed systems are associated with higher organizational performance. In two of these studies, the effects of mixed systems were assessed through the interaction between individual and collective performance systems. SHI Biao et al. found that employee share ownership plans led to some increase in productivity, while increases in individual bonuses were more modest. Pendleton & Robinson, using data from the 2004 UK Workplace Employment Relations Survey, found that hybrid systems were associated with higher labor productivity (as assessed by management respondents) because when used with profit-sharing individual incentives increase in effectiveness, and to a lesser extent with group incentives. Of the three methods, profit sharing alone had the strongest effect. The reasons behind the findings were not directly investigated, but the authors' theoretical presentation suggests that profit sharing can avoid the negative effects associated with individual programs and reduce their incidence when individual programs are used. Similarly, group plans can reduce free-rider behavior and encourage people to link individual performance to collective outcomes. Although profit sharing is an incentive in which the link between individual effort and reward is weak, it helps to address multi-objective issues and is therefore particularly valuable in jobs involving multi-tasking and a high degree of discretion [27].

5.4. Relevant Factors Affecting The Effectiveness Of Pay-For-Performance Systems

Feedback on team performance is the moderator in Gjedrem & Kvaløy's experiment involving decoding numbers into letters, which they found that team incentives had a positive effect where feedback was given, and even that the absence of feedback had a negative effect. They found that team incentives had a positive effect where feedback was given, and even that the absence of feedback had a negative effect. Both teamwork and feedback had limited impact where the other was not used [28].

Pendleton & Robinson determined the superiority of a hybrid system by testing interactions focusing on the moderating role of task discretion and task variety in core workplace jobs. Profit sharing, either alone or in conjunction with other incentives, has a greater effect when the job design has a high degree of discretion as well as high task diversity. Individual payment systems are found to negatively affect labor productivity in high discretionary jobs; however, these effects become positive when group incentives are added, and even more so when profit sharing is used. Where job discretion is low, individual incentives may have a positive impact on productivity, which Pendleton & Robinson hypothesize is due to limited opportunities for workers to manipulate or distort the system.

Finally, as we have seen, group affiliation is the moderator in their experiment with professional financial advisors conducted by Danilov et al., which found that advisors in groups receiving group

incentives are more likely to recommend inferior quality products to clients, because it benefitted them financially, than when receiving individual incentives where group affiliation is high, but not where it is low [29].

6. Conclusions And Future Perspectives

6.1. Conclusions

In all but two studies, collective payment systems outperform individual ones, either when used alone or in conjunction with individual systems. However, we cannot conclude unequivocally in favor of their superiority. Most significantly, 64% of studies considering hybrid systems found them to produce greater performance effects than collective or individual systems used alone. Also, flat-rate systems perform best in half of the rare cases where they are included in the analysis. The prevalence of moderating effects in the studies testing for them also limits the extent to which we can decisively conclude about the relative advantage of collective systems. We can be more certain about recommending that individual pay systems are unlikely to be optimal. The implication for future theoretical and empirical work is the need to include hybrid and flat-rate systems when comparing individual and collective pay systems, and to explore boundary conditions in greater depth. This might start with differentiation between individualized and team-based work organization. The implication of our review is that collective incentives have less effect in more individualized systems where task interdependency is low, but a greater impact where task interdependency is high, and that the effect is stronger when collective incentives are accompanied by feedback and mentoring. Other aspects of teams may be important, especially following leads in the “sorting” studies. For example, team size may affect high performers' orientations towards free riders, as the larger the team, the lower the impact of low performers on team output, while the nature of teams may affect the extent to which low performers fear ostracization or losing face through underperformance. The sorting studies suggest greater focus is needed on low performers than has previously been the case. Also, the potential gains from improving the performance of middle-ranking performers may be the most readily achieved, and be disproportionately large. Our discussion of sorting also suggests the need to control for the level of wages in any analysis, treating it as a potential moderator of the effects of pay systems on the sorting effect on performance.

6.2. Future Perspectives

The limited exploration of mediators of payment system impacts in the research and the lack of testing of the undermining effects of performance-related pay on intrinsic motivation also highlight the need for more theoretical development. Discussions of outcomes related to collective systemic effects have focused on their positive impact on collective processes and cooperation within the workplace. Previous research has referred to a variety of mechanisms, including idea generation and sharing, helping behaviors, improved work practices, and goal interdependence. Future theoretical and empirical research will need to incorporate these mediators to determine their relative importance and ultimately whether they themselves are moderated. Relevant scholars also called for a deeper consideration of mediators more than 30 years ago (although they focused on individual-level factors such as elicitation and entrapment), and Beersma et al. explicitly drew attention to this issue as a weakness of their experimental study. The literature's neglect of the issue of intrinsic motivation being undermined also needs to be addressed. The focus of this issue is usually on impeding the realization of the need for autonomy. However, we extend the discussion by arguing that pay systems may have an impact on two other needs: relevance and competence. Comparisons of performance-related pay also fail to address the role of organizational justice perceptions in promoting the potential benefits of intrinsic motivation [30].

Our review has important implications for the broader stream of HRM performance research because it implies that if high-performance work systems are identified through evidence-based high-performance practices, then collective payment systems should be included and the focus on

individual systems should be abandoned. However, if the hypothetical model of good management is built around directive performance management, as Van et al. points out, then pay related to individual performance could be included in its measurement [31]. The study provides some encouragement for the use of collective systems to support high levels of engagement or commitment to management, as their effect may be through increased cooperation and relational coordination. However, no studies have tested whether there is an interaction effect on performance between performance-linked collective pay and highly engaged management. The implications of these recommendations must be qualified by the fact that our research is inconclusive on the relative impact of hybrid systems (or even flat rate systems). It may also be necessary to incorporate them into measures of high-performance work systems or as support for high-engagement management.

Above all, the imperative must be longitudinal studies of longer duration than is typical in the literature we reviewed—first, to test the mediation model, and second, to test whether any payment system-performance relationship is enduring or fading over time. Given the costs and problems involved in collecting data over time and conducting experiments with the same participants, simulation studies offer a promising way forward, as multiple time periods can easily be incorporated into such studies.

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