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Employee Motivation During Post Covid-19 Period at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the heart of an organization. In order for an organization to run smoothly, employees' cooperation is necessary. A motivated employee is crucial to ensure that the organization can achieve their goals. The lack of employees' motivation could give a negative impact to the organization. Thus, this study examines the employee motivation during post Covid-19 at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. Reward, work environment and recognition play essential roles in increasing employees' motivation. Data was collected using quantitative research by distributing 113 questionnaires to the employees of Hotel Seri Malaysia in Kuantan, Pahang. It was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result shows that reward, work environment and recognition have a relationship with employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang.

Keywords: Motivation, Reward, Work Environment, Recognition

INTRODUCTION

All individuals are drawn to some forms of motivation, whether intrinsic, extrinsic or a combination of both. These are seen both in an individual's personal and professional realm. Due to this, organizations are seeking answers as to whether programmes that cater to extrinsic motivation are necessary for their employees to continue to be productive and effective. These programmes come, at sometimes, with substantial cost, and it is imperative to determine whether there is an actual need for extrinsic motivation in the workplace.

The main objective of the motivation is one of the most important things that could enhance an organization's growth. Understanding motivation is important for employers since it could affect employees' performance. Intrinsic and extrinsic forces can both encourage people. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the person, whereas extrinsic motivation comes from outside the person. Extrinsic motivation includes money, prizes, deadlines, and punishment, whereas intrinsic motivation includes enjoyment, purpose, pride, interest, knowledge, and self-worth (Tovmasyan & Minasyan, 2020). For this study, we choose extrinsic motivation among employees at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang.

Motivation is the fuel that drives people towards accomplishing their goals and objectives. In fact, without this fuel, human beings would be inactive, leading to a routine and unproductive life. Employee motivation in the hotel industry has been declining as Covid-19 has a significant impact on tourism and hospitality industry's operational viability and development ability. Consequently, the public health crisis influenced and changed hotel management policies and activities (Zhang et al., 2021).

Work motivation is the desire that causes a person to take action to achieve the goal of meeting the needs or achieving balance (Christian et al., 2020). There are several motivational theories at this time, this study uses motivation theory from Abraham H. Maslow as a reference in analyzing existing problems and providing several solutions for the company's recommendations. Employee motivation is very important because they play a big role in the success of the company. To maintain the success of the company, employer needs to make sure that their employees are always highly motivated so that they can do the best in their work and will give the best performance and achieve work satisfaction. There is a positive association between employee motivation and work satisfaction. (Khuong & Linh, 2020).

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 in Malaysia, hotel owners have been among the most affected enterprises. Hence, due to covid-19 cases in Malaysia showing a decline, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has announced to allow the reopening of the hotel industry in August 2021 (Zaki, 2021). Thus, this study is being conducted to know factors of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that could trigger employee motivation during post Covid-19 period in the hotel industry in Kuantan, Pahang.

There are several branches of Hotel Seri Malaysia on the east coast. Four branches in Pahang and one branch in Terengganu. This study chose to examine employee motivation during post-Covid-19 at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan. This hotel is located at Jalan Teluk Sisek, Kuantan. There are three objectives of this research:

1. To examine the relationship between reward and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan.

2. To examine the relationship between work environment and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan.

3. To examine the relationship between recognition and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical Significance

The researcher expands the existing theory for example Herzberg's Motivation Theory model. According to Herzberg's Motivation Theory, an organization can influence motivation in the workplace by adjusting two factors. This theory has two factors which are motivator and hygiene. For the motivating factor, it is closely related to the variable used for this research which is recognition, for example, employers must praise and give recognition to employees for their success. This recognition should come from superiors and peers so that the employees will be more motivated. Other than that, the reward is also one of the factors that can be related to the theory. Reward employment can improve the organizational value and also employee motivation. These rewards can be given to employees when they achieved high-quality work or display outstanding performance levels. The focuses of the theory are to improve job satisfaction, as well as the work environment. The work environment can be a factor that causes employees to be more motivated because when the work environment is more positive the employees will be satisfied with their work.

Practical Significance

The researcher hopes this research can give practical significance to the employees, organization, and as well as readers. The employees will be more motivated at work because they feel satisfied if they are rewarded for their hard work. The result of this research is expected to be useful for the organization because it can help organizations to increase their employees' motivation and this research will contribute to the organization on how to increase employee motivation or how to encourage the employees to work harder. The higher the employee motivation among hotel employees, the higher the level of job satisfaction and the level of success of a hotel organization. Not only that, it will also help the researcher to explore more about the extrinsic motivation and the impact of the employees' motivation during the post-covid-19 period in Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation

Motivation is a process that excite, guide, and maintain human behaviour towards achieving some objectives (Seng & Arumugam, 2017). Butkus and Green (1999) claim that motivation is derived from the term "motivate," which means "to move, urge, or influence toward the achievement of a desire (Dwibedi, 2018). Motivation, according Bartol and Martin (1998), is

indeed a factor that enhances action, creates a pathway for conduct, and triggers the interest in continuing (Dwibedi, 2018). This explanation recognises that in order to achieve certain goals, people must be sufficiently energetic and have a clear idea of where they want to go.

According to Bedeian (1993), it is an innate drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need and the drive to succeed. Motivation is a process that begins with a physiological or psychological desire to stimulate a performance aimed at achieving a goal. It is the end result of the interaction between personality behaviour and organizational uniqueness. Motivation is also series of actions that lead to and support goal-directed conduct. Individuals are motivated to achieve personal and organizational goals by internal strength (Dwibedi, 2018).

Reward

Rewards include pay and benefits, financial bonuses, advancements, and incentives, as long as they would satisfy employees to some extent (Danish & Usman, 2010). Rewards and employee motivation have a positive and direct relationship, according to significant data and past studies. Bowen (2002) describes that reward is something which is given or received in return for success or achievement. In other word, reward is used as an appreciation of certain behaviour in the shape of monetary or non-monetary incentives after a certain accomplishment or success (Zeb et al., 2014).

Salaries, financial remuneration, and compensation costs are all factors that might influence an organization's success. Salary can encourage, stimulate, and guide employees to stay focused on their responsibilities. Financial incentives are used to attract and keep eligible workers compensation cost-convinces with a company, as well as increase the quality of their job (Akafo & Boateng, 2015). In simple word, it demonstrates the relationship between motivation and reward; if the incentive offered changes, employees' work motivation will vary, and high-performance levels will result.

Work Environment

The work environment is a location where employees may engage with one another, share ideas, and help them compete with the healthy and well-equipped to meet the demand of workers (Pepe, 2010). One of the factors that encourages employees, according to Rafikul & Ahmad (2008), is the condition of the working environment itself, which ensures that the employees feel safe going to work. As a result of the findings, faculty members are more motivated to work in the safety field. According to Bent et al. (2000) pleasant environment in the business will help to contribute towards employees' job satisfaction or may help to motivate employees to work harder (Pepe, 2010).

People behave differently in organizations as a result of their surroundings, and this has a significant impact on their attitude towards the job that needs to be done. According to Atkinson and Hall (2011), employees will be happier and more motivated if they have influence over their working environment. Environmental factors are characteristics of the immediate work environment, and they have emerged as one of the aspects that might aid in employee motivation and job satisfaction. According to Musriha (2011), a pleasant working atmosphere is critical and it serves as an incentive for individuals to achieve their highest levels of performance. According to Sims & Kroeck (1994), working environment is a strong favourable element for individuals to attain job success (Pepe, 2010).

Recognition

Recognition, according to Harrison (2005), is "the timely, informal or formal acknowledgement of a person's or team's behaviour, effort, or business result that supports the organization's goals and values and is usually beyond normal expectations" (Delgado et al., 2018). According to Brun and Dugas (2008), acknowledgement is largely a symbolic reward, but it can also have

emotional, practical, or financial value. Deeprose (1994) stated that effective recognition can promote employee engagement and productivity, resulting in improved organizational performance. Employee recognition programmes show that you care about them. Employee appreciation programmes that are genuine and insightful are about respecting employees' efforts and showing respect for who they are and what they do (Akafo & Boateng, 2015).

Rewards and recognition, according to Maurer (2001), are critical variables in increasing employee job satisfaction and motivation, which is linked to organisation. Kalimullah Khan conducted research into the relationship between rewards and employee performance and motivation in Pakistani commercial banks. the study looked at four different sorts of incentives, one of which was monetary. He used Pearson correlation to assess his recognition. The findings revealed a link between recognition and a success employee job motivation significantly (0.65) (Dwibedi, 2018).

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were made based on the factors of reward, work environment and recognition that influence the motivation and attitude of each employee in the Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan. Based on the study, hypotheses that will be tested are:

- **H₁** There is a relationship between reward and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.
- **H₂** There is a relationship between working environment and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.
- **H₃** There is a relationship between employee recognition and motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.

Research Framework

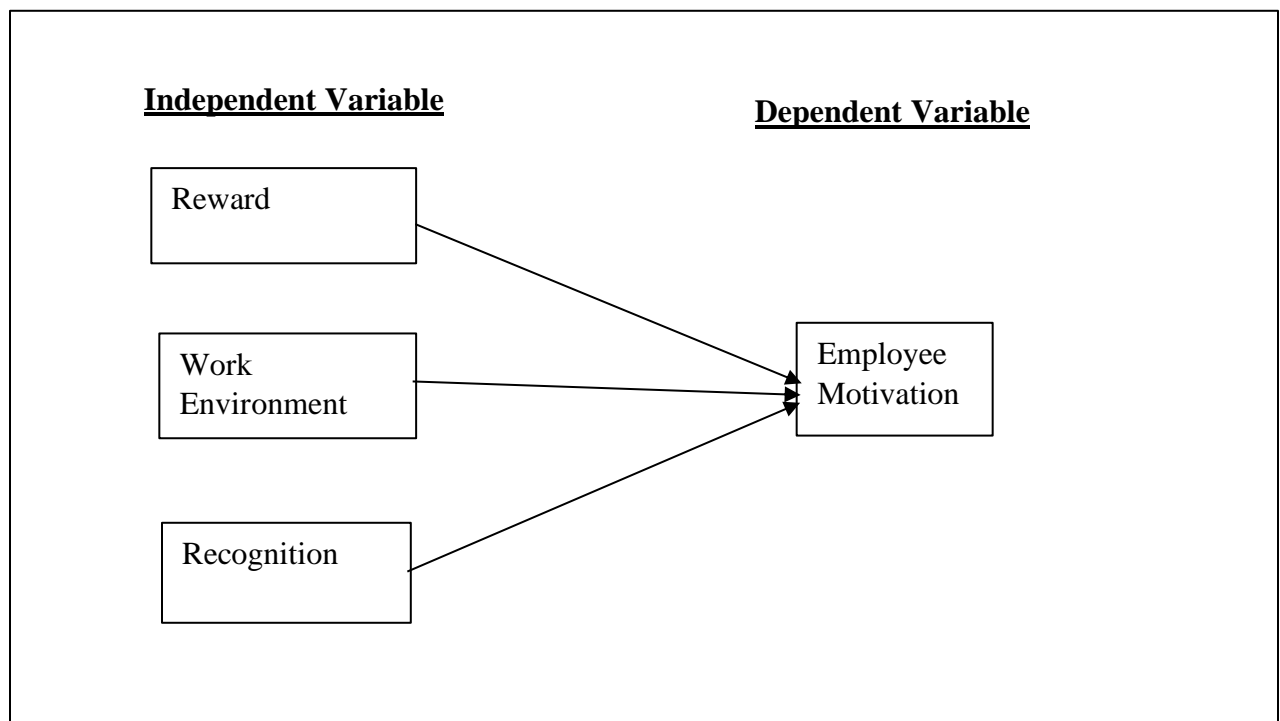Figure 1 below shows the research framework used for this study

Figure 1: Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design indicates the general strategy that the researcher chooses to assimilate the differences of the research consistently and rationally. This study used the quantitative method where questionnaires were distributed to 113 employees of Hotel Seri Malaysia. In this research, the target populations chosen were employees at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. This was due to the employees' motivation during post Covid-19 period.

Moreover, a set of questionnaires was distributed to the population to collect the data. The researcher divided the questionnaire into 5 sections which are Section A, B, C, D and E. For Section A, the questionnaire requested for the general information about the employees' demographic such as gender, age, race, marital status and monthly income of demographic information. For Section B, C, D and E, the questions elaborated more on the dependent and independent variables which were (i) Reward, (ii) Work Environment, (iii) Recognition and (iv) Employee Motivation that were examined in the survey. This questionnaire used the format of multiple choices and 5-point Likert scales of agreement.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted using questionnaires. This study chose to distribute the questionnaires using Google form application. The link to the Google form was distributed to all 113 employees of Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan. This Google form was shared on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and Facebook. It was very convenient to minimize the cost, save time and significantly applicable during this pandemic outbreak.

Sampling

The sampling method used in this study is the non-probability sampling which is convenience sampling. The study used this method because the questionnaire was prepared and distributed online through social media pages to gather information from the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who are among employees at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang through online and social media.

$$S = \frac{x^2 Np(1 - P)}{e^2(N - 1) + x^2 p(1 - p)}$$

n= sample size
N= population size
e = the degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)
$x2$ = chi-square of degree of freedom 1 and confidence 95% (3.841)
p = proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5)

Data Analysis

There are four types of data analysis used in this study, namely frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability test and Pearson correlation analysis. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 25.

FINDINGS

Result of Frequency Analysis

Table 1 below shows the result of frequency analysis.

Table 1: Frequency Analysis

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	59	50.9
Female	54	49.1
Race		
Malay	107	94.5
Chinese	4	3.6
Indian	1	.9
Others	1	.9
Age		
21-30	104	91.8
31-40	7	6.4
41-50	2	1.8
Marital Status		
Married	24	19.1
Single	89	80.9
Monthly Income		
RM 1,000-RM 2,099	94	85.5
RM 2,100-RM 3,099	15	10.9
RM 3,100-RM 4,099	4	3.6

A total of 113 sets of questionnaires have been assigned through online platform. The contextual profiles of the respondents are provided in this segment. This segment shows the respondents' demographic profile and their background which are gender, race, age, marital status and monthly income. Most of the respondents are male with 50.9% (n=59) while 49.1% (n=54) are female. Most of the respondents are Malay with a frequency of 107 respondents (94.5%), followed by Chinese with 4 respondents (3.6%), Indian and others respectively has 1 respondent (0.9%). Besides, most of the respondents are single with 80.9% (n=89) while 19.1% (n=24) are married. Moreover, most of the respondents who responded to this survey are between 21-30 years old with a frequency of 104 respondents (91.8%). This is followed by 31-40 years old with 7 respondents (6.4%) and age 41-50 years old with 2 respondents (1.8%). The highest income of respondents is RM1000 - RM 2099 with 94 respondents (85.5%), followed by RM2100-RM3099 with 15 respondents (10.9%), and RM3000-RM4099 income with 4 respondents (3.6%).

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 below shows the result of descriptive analysis.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Reward	My company encourages workers to perform better by providing additional benefits and rewards	4.45	0.668

	I am pleased with the current reward that the company offered	4.34	0.830
	I am rewarded fairly for the work that I do	4.27	0.869
	My company often give monetary reward such as pay increases and bonuses to the employee	4.21	0.891
	My company gives stock options as a reward to the employee	3.92	1.127
Work Environment	The vibe at my workplace is positive and motivating	4.46	0.695
	I feel comfortable and relaxed at my workplace	4.34	0.727
	My company provides all the tools and materials for my job	4.28	0.785
	My company is dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion	4.31	0.733
	My company operates in a socially responsible manner	4.33	0.749
Recognition	The recognition I receive from my direct manager motivates me to do my best	4.39	0.674
	My contribution in team efforts is recognized fairly	4.33	0.633
	I feel that my work is seen and appreciated within my organization	4.29	0.764
	My leaders and peers complimented my work regularly	4.21	0.839
	My direct manager entrusts me with a high level of responsibility	4.26	0.753
Employee Motivation	I feel inspired to do my best at work every day	4.46	0.695
	I am motivated to go extra mile at work	4.41	0.690
	I look forward to going to work on Monday	4.19	0.931
	I am motivated by my organization's vision	4.26	0.843
	I feel I am contributing to the overall goals of my organisation	4.35	0.790

Based on Table 2 above, the reward variable shows that the respondents strongly agree about *'my company encourages workers to perform better by providing additional benefits and rewards'* as the mean is at the level 4.45. Next, the respondents also strongly agree with the statement *'I am pleased with the current reward that the company offered'* as the mean shows 4.34. The respondents strongly agree with the statement *'I am rewarded fairly for the work that I do'* as the mean is at the level 4.27. The respondents strongly agree about *'My company often gives monetary reward such as pay increases and bonuses to the employees'* as the mean shows 4.21. Last but not least, the respondents agree about *'My company gives stock options as a reward to the employee'* as the mean is at the level 3.92.

Based on the work environment variable, from the results, the respondents strongly agree about *'The vibe of my workplace is positive and motivating'* as the mean level is 4.46. Besides, the respondents strongly agree with the statement *'I feel comfortable and relaxed at my workplace'* as the mean level shows 4.34. The respondents also strongly agree about *'My company provides all the tools and materials for my job'* with the mean level is 4.28. The respondents also strongly agree about *'My company is dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion'* as the mean level shows 4.31. Last but not least, the respondents also strongly agree about *'My company operates in a socially responsible manner'* with the mean level is 4.33.

Based on the recognition variable, from the results, the respondents strongly agree with the statement *'The recognition I receive from my direct manager motivates me to do my best'*

as the mean level is 4.39. Besides, the respondents strongly agree about *'My contribution in team efforts is recognized fairly'* as the mean level shows 4.33. The respondents also strongly agree with the statement *'I feel that my work is seen and appreciated within my organization'* as the mean level is 4.29. The respondents also strongly agree about *'My leaders and peers complimented my work regularly'* as the mean level shows 4.21. Last but not least, the respondents strongly agree about *'My direct manager entrusts me with a high level of responsibility'* as the mean level is 4.26.

Based on the employee motivation variable, from the results, the respondents strongly agree with the statement *'I feel inspired to do my best at work every day'* as the mean level is 4.46. Besides, the respondents strongly agree about *'I am motivated to go extra mile at work'* as the mean level shows 4.41. The respondents also strongly agree with the statement *'I look forward to going to work on Monday'* as the mean level is 4.19. The respondents also strongly agree about *'I am motivated by my organization's vision'* as the mean level shows 4.26. Last but not least, the respondents strongly agree with the statement *'I feel I am contributing to the overall goals of my organization'* as the mean level is 4.35.

Result of Reliability Analysis

Table 3 below shows the result of the reliability analysis.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Reward	5	0.875
Work Environment	5	0.931
Recognition	5	0.930
Employee Motivation	5	0.919

Based on Table 3 above, the reliability value for each variable is close to 1 and more than 0.6. In research from Sekaran and Bougie (2019), the closer the result to 1, the more reliable would be the test. The reliability values less than 0.60 are considered as poor, those around 0.70 are acceptable and those over 0.80 are good. Therefore, it can be concluded that the instrument is reliable.

Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below shows the result of the Pearson Correlation Analysis.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result (Supported/Not Supported)
H_1: There is a relationship between reward and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.	0.000	H1 is supported
H_2: There is a relationship between the work environment and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.	0.000	H2 is supported
H_3: There is a relationship between employee recognition and motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang	0.000	H3 is supported

Based on Table 4 above, the significant value for the relationship between reward and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan is 0.000 which is below 0.05, and when the p is less than 0.05 that means we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Which is proven that there is a significant relationship between reward and employee motivation during post Covid-19 at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang.

Besides, the significant value for the relationship between work environment and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan is 0.000 which is below 0.05, and when the p is less than 0.05 that means we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Which is proven that there is a significant relationship between reward and employee motivation during post Covid-19 at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang.

The significant value for the relationship between recognition and employee motivation at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan is 0.000 which is below 0.05, and when the p is less than 0.05 that means we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Which is proven that there is a significant relationship between reward and employee motivation during post Covid-19 at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Discussions are aimed at solving questions and addressing hypotheses as mentioned in the first chapter of this study. In general, this study has extensively researched the employee motivation during post Covid-19 in Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. The main findings of this study have shown from the results of the analysis that there is a significant alliance between employee motivation, reward and recognition at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. In line with that, previous studies also showed the significance relationship between employee motivation, reward and recognition. Therefore, this research has focused on problem-solving and information gathering in groups. Based on the findings of the study, the current study would provide several recommendations for the hotel industry and future researchers to understand that a motivated employee is crucial to ensure that organization can achieve their goals.

The first thing that needs to improve for future research is to encourage respondents to become more active in participating in surveys, thus lead to researchers having good data for conducting research at Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. As a result, trustworthy data can also help the researcher to understand the constraints for each visitor. However, an acquisition process is required to create facts and statistics. As a result, conducting an interview with hotel staff is advised as a qualitative approach.

Second, the research should broaden the sample size and balance the number of locations and staff. A large sample size should be used to allow researchers to detect similarities and differences. As a result, the approach of collecting samples in big quantities aids the researcher in the study process. However, a good method can help researchers to find out the lacking of every employee.

Finally, relevant parties should provide specific statistical data related to employees. This will help streamline the research process of conducting research. The hotel needs to play an important role in helping researchers to produce accurate data and to collect specifics statistical data and following this can help for more accurate research to be produced with the help of statistics.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has been accomplished to discover the employee motivation during post Covid-19 in Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. Three independent variables, namely reward, work environment and recognition have been chosen to examine their relationships with the dependent variable which is the employee motivation during post Covid-19 in Hotel Seri Malaysia Kuantan, Pahang. A total of 113 respondents from the age of 21 years old and above were selected among the employees in Hotel Seri Malaysia, Kuantan to examine their motivation to work during post Covid-19. Overall, based on Pearson Correlation analysis, working environment scored a value of 0.853, followed by reward with 0.845 and recognition with 0.800.

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