

# Reward Management System on Employee Motivation in MSMEs: A Systematic Literature Review

Original Article

Mirza Esvanti<sup>1\*</sup>, Sopiah<sup>2</sup>, Ludi Wishnu Wardana<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Doctoral Program in Management Science, Faculty of Economics and Business, State University of Malang

Email: <sup>1\*)</sup> [mirza.esvanti.2404139@students.um.ac.id](mailto:mirza.esvanti.2404139@students.um.ac.id) , <sup>2)</sup> [sopiah.fe@um.ac.id](mailto:sopiah.fe@um.ac.id)

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## Abstract

The role of MSMEs as a business enterprise service must certainly have a strategy to improve employee performance, one of which is appreciation for their performance and achievements in increasing revenue or profit for the organization. This research is a systematic literature study (SLR) that aims to analyze trends in scientific publications related to the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) from various aspects, including the type of document, scientific field, and country of origin of the author. The analysis shows that the majority of documents are scientific articles (83.3%), with the dominant fields including Business, Management and Accounting and Social Sciences (25% each). The largest source of publications came from the United Kingdom and Malaysia. This finding shows that there is considerable scientific attention to MSME development, especially from countries with strong entrepreneurial systems. In the Indonesian context, the results of this study provide an important illustration of the need for cross-disciplinary knowledge integration and the adoption of research-based policies from other countries to strengthen the competitiveness of national MSMEs. The study also recommends increased international collaboration and research focus on aspects of digitalization, innovation and sustainability in the development of MSMEs in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Rewards, Motivation, Reward Management System.

## 1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive business environment, companies must develop effective strategies to enhance employee performance. One crucial strategy in human resource management is reward management - a system of recognizing and rewarding employees for their contributions and achievements (Li et al., 2019; Řehoř & Vrchota, 2018; Shafique & Beh, 2016). Properly implemented reward systems can significantly boost employee motivation, loyalty, and long-term productivity (Park et al., 2019; Ruiz-Lozano et al., 2019). Conversely, poorly managed reward systems may lead to dissatisfaction and decreased morale. Therefore, organizations must thoroughly understand the concepts, types, and effective implementation of reward management.

Reward management plays a vital role in creating positive and productive work environments (Oswald et al., 2022; Patel et al., 2023; Yang & Chen, 2019). This system encompasses not only financial compensation but also non-financial rewards such as recognition, promotions, and career development opportunities. By implementing appropriate reward strategies, companies can attract and retain top talent (Cagno et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2013). Moreover, fair and transparent reward systems enhance employees' sense of justice, fostering a healthy work culture that supports overall organizational goals.



Various motivation theories have demonstrated the significant impact of rewards on employee behavior and performance. Theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory show that appropriate rewards can enhance job satisfaction and employee commitment (Eze et al., 2013; Johnstone, 2021; Odrakiewicz et al., 2023). Organizations that apply work psychology-based reward management tend to have more productive and results-oriented workforces (Abaeian et al., 2019; Guerci et al., 2021; Smit et al., 2021). Thus, deep understanding of these theories is essential for developing effective reward policies that not only improve employee well-being but also support business growth.

Despite its benefits, reward management implementation faces several challenges. A primary challenge involves designing reward systems that align with organizational culture and employee needs. Companies must ensure rewards are distributed fairly and objectively to prevent employee resentment (By & Dale, 2008; Bykova et al., 2022; Xuan, 2020). Additionally, organizations must consider the sustainability of reward systems to maintain relevance amid changing business environments, making regular evaluation and adjustment crucial.

By understanding the importance of reward management, organizations can develop appropriate strategies to enhance employee performance and satisfaction. This study aims to analyze reward management concepts, theories, best practices, and their implications for organizational success (Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2020; Al-Haziati, 2024; Prabadevi & Subramanian, 2023). It will also examine factors influencing reward system effectiveness, providing deeper insights into optimal reward management. Thus, reward management can become a strategic tool for achieving competitive advantage in business.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Reward Management

Reward Management stands as one of the most complex and challenging aspects of human resource management due to its profound long-term impact on organizational strategic objectives (Chikwariro et al., 2021; McWha-Hermann et al., 2022; Yadewani & Wijaya, 2019). The primary challenge for management lies in creating conditions that motivate employees to deliver maximum performance for company advancement. According to Mondy (2005), compensation encompasses all rewards employees receive in exchange for their services. Indonesia's Labor Law No. 13 of 2003 defines work competency as an individual's work capabilities covering knowledge, skills, and work attitudes that meet established standards.

The fundamental objectives of reward compensation are to attract, retain, and motivate employees. Compensation is categorized into three types: direct financial compensation, indirect financial compensation, and non-financial compensation. Direct financial compensation includes wages, salaries, commissions, and bonuses. Indirect financial compensation (benefits) comprises all financial rewards not included in direct compensation (MARIN, 2021; Minárová et al., 2021; Speckbacher, 2021), typically received indirectly by employees. Non-financial compensation involves satisfaction derived from the job itself or from the psychological and physical work environment (Gulzar et al., 2024; Lamichhane et al., 2024; Mabasa & Eresia-Eke, 2025; Mabaso et al., 2021).

The wage or salary management process (sometimes referred to as compensation) involves careful consideration and balance. Compensation represents something regarded as equivalent - in employment contexts, monetary rewards serve as compensation given to employees in recognition of their services. Various forms of wage payments and salary

structures regulate financial exchanges between employers and employees (Akter et al., 2022; Hopkins & Dowell, 2022; Sixpence et al., 2021). Wages constitute remuneration, payment for services rendered by employees, with numerous payment forms existing, both monetary and non-monetary (Chatzoglou et al., 2024; Choi, 2024; Kościółek, 2022; Meirinhos et al., 2023).

For employers, compensation represents a crucial component of personnel management. Personnel policies frequently involve compensation considerations (Chan & Ma, 2022; Fischer, 2024; Mathafena & Grobler, 2020; Musie & Wolvaardt, 2021). Compensation levels significantly correlate with employees' education levels, positions, and tenure. Therefore, determining employee compensation should consider performance evaluations, conduct, education level, position, and length of service. The compensation provided to employees substantially influences job satisfaction, work motivation, and performance outcomes (Boudreau et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2022; Mukwevho & Bussin, 2021). Companies that set wage levels considering normal living standards enable employees to work with full motivation, as work motivation largely depends on whether employees' basic living needs and those of their families are met.

## 2.2. Forms of Reward Management

The forms of individual compensation according to Mondy (2005) can be seen in the figure 1 below:

<b>COMPENSATION</b>			
<b>FINANCIAL</b>		<b>NON FINANCIAL</b>	
<b>Direct</b> Wages Salaries Commissions Bonuses	<b>Indirect / benefit</b> <b>Mandatory</b> Social security Worker compensation Employee compensation Family and death benefits	<b>Job</b> Skill variety Job importance Key duties Feedback	<b>Work Environment</b> Policies Competent peers Supervisory support Symbols of status Meaningful work
<b>Optional</b>	Unpaid leave Paid vacations Health insurance Retirement plan Stock purchase Tuition reimbursement Employee perks Fringe benefits	<b>Work Flexibility</b> Flextime Compressed week Job sharing Telecommuting Part-time jobs Paid leave	

**Figure 1. Types of Compensation**

Employee motivation is the internal drive that drives an employee to achieve goals and targets for their work. Motivation can be influenced by various factors, including the work environment, company policies, relationships between employees and the reward and recognition system (Alsaad et al., 2024; De Silva et al., 2023; Maake et al., 2021). For employees who are already motivated tend to have a very high work enthusiasm, good productivity, and a strong commitment to the company. High motivation can also play a very important role in increasing innovation, creativity, and efficiency in completing work tasks while, (Chala et al., 2022; Gunawan et al., 2024; Rajeswaran et al., 2023) which categorizes motivation into three categories: work, individual, and work environment characteristics. In

addition, social cognitive and social exchange theories are also used to explain how rewards and organizational investments can motivate employees.

### 3. Methods

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant scientific evidence regarding the role of skill competition in enhancing learning motivation and work performance among employees in manufacturing companies. The review process follows a systematic protocol based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), comprising four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. During the identification phase, the authors conducted searches for scholarly articles through reputable databases such as Scopus, using keywords including "(reward AND management AND motivation)". The inclusion criteria encompassed articles published within the last five years (2019–2025), written in English, and relevant to the context of reward management.

For data analysis, the study applies thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify key patterns and emerging themes across the reviewed literature. The extracted data includes research identifiers (authors, publication year, journal sources), research methodologies employed (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods), main findings, and research contexts (industry, country, and organization type). To ensure research quality and validity, the PRISMA method (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Moher et al., 2009) was utilized for reporting literature selection outcomes. The analyzed studies were systematically compared to identify patterns, research gaps, and current trends in the existing literature. The rigorous methodology enables comprehensive synthesis of evidence while maintaining transparency and reproducibility in the research process. This approach facilitates the development of evidence-based insights into how skill competition influences employee motivation and performance within manufacturing organizational contexts.

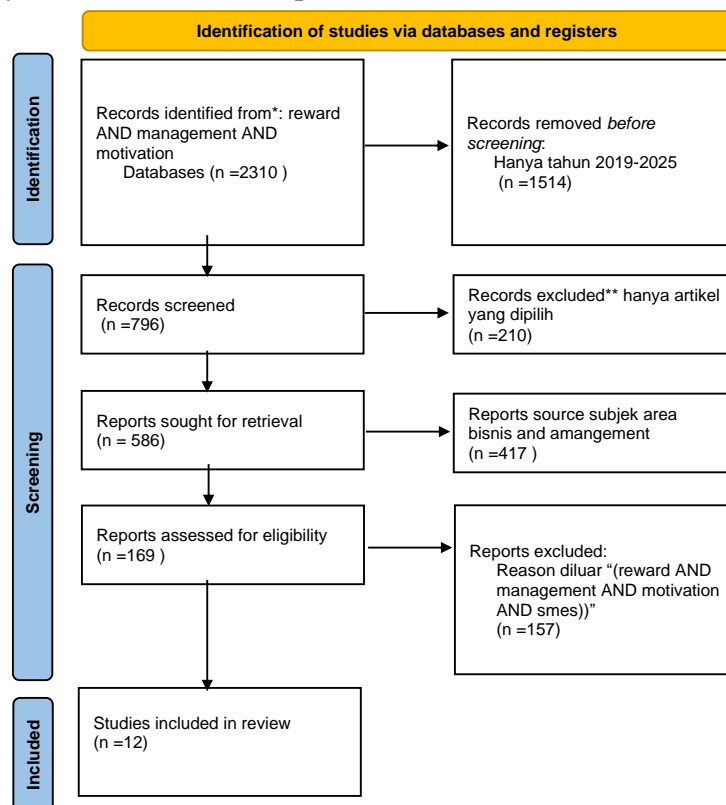
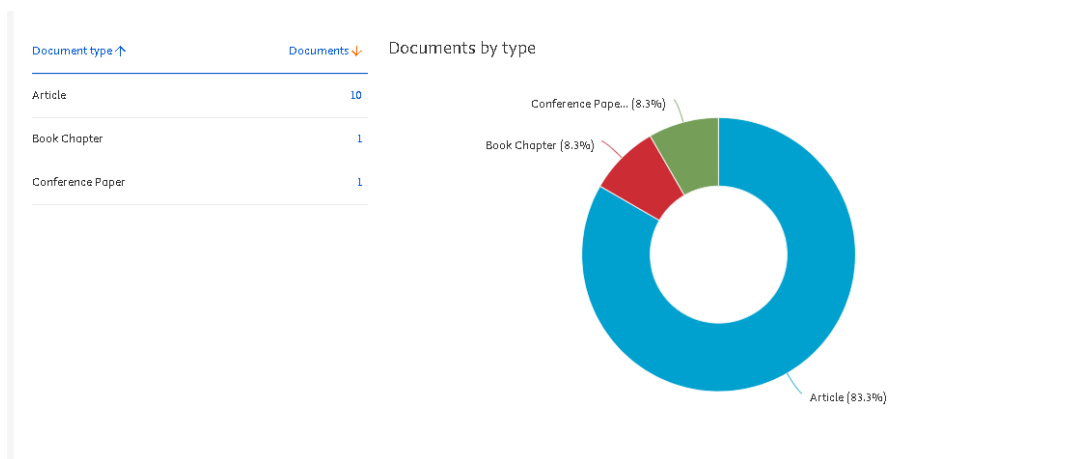


Figure 2. Prisma Method

The PRISMA flowchart above is a systematic review process flowchart based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. This process begins with the identification stage, where a total of 2,310 articles were found through searching with the keywords “reward AND management AND motivation” from various databases. Prior to the screening process, 1,514 articles were removed because they did not fit the specified publication year range, which was only from 2019 to 2025. Next, 796 articles were further screened. At this stage, 210 articles were excluded because they did not belong to the selected types of scientific articles. From the screening results, 586 reports were searched for complete documents, but 417 reports were excluded because they did not come from the subject area of business and management. The next stage was an eligibility assessment of 189 reports that met the previous criteria. However, 177 reports were again excluded because they did not fully fit the main topic of “reward AND management AND motivation AND SMEs”. Finally, only 12 studies were found eligible and included in the systematic literature review.

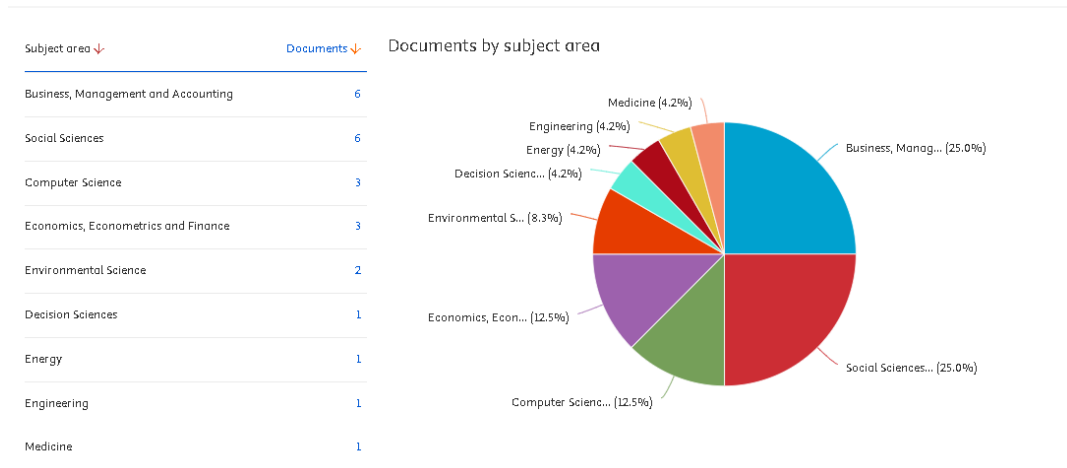
## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Data Analysis



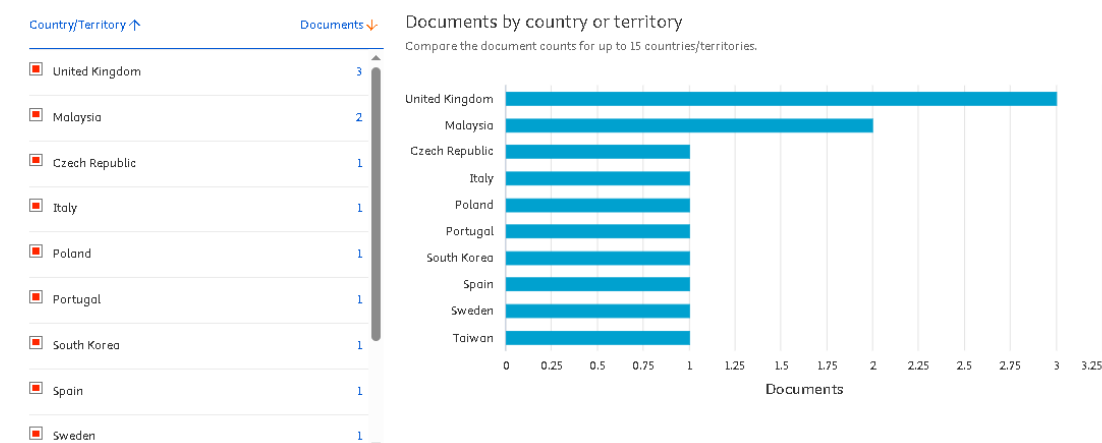
**Diagram 1. Total Document Article**

Based on the diagram shown, the most dominant document type in this study is scientific articles, which accounted for 83.3% of the total documents, i.e. 10 documents out of a total of 12. Meanwhile, other document types such as book chapters and conference papers each only contributed 8.3%, or one document for each type. The dominance of scientific articles shows that the studies used as references in this study are mostly sourced from academic journals that have gone through a peer-review process, so they can be considered to have high scientific validity. This also reflects that themes related to HR management, reward systems, and motivation in the context of MSMEs are more formally and deeply discussed in academic literature than in the form of books or conference proceedings.



**Diagram 2. Subject area**

Based on the document distribution diagram by subject area, it can be seen that the most studied topics in the literature used come from two main fields, namely Business, Management and Accounting and Social Sciences, each contributing 25% of the total documents or 6 documents. Furthermore, the fields of Computer Science and Economics, Econometrics and Finance each contributed 12.5% (3 documents), while Environmental Science had a contribution of 8.3% (2 documents). The rest come from the fields of Decision Sciences, Energy, Engineering, and Medicine, each contributing 4.2% or one document. This distribution shows that discussions on MSMEs are highly relevant in both business and social contexts, reflecting the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in understanding the dynamics and challenges faced by MSMEs. The integration of computer science and economics also strengthens the technological and analytical approach to MSME development, especially in the digital age. Although the contributions from fields such as energy, medicine and engineering are relatively small, their presence still shows the interconnectedness across sectors in supporting sustainability and innovation in the MSME sector.



**Graphics 2. document distribution chart by country or region**

Based on the document distribution chart by country or region, it can be seen that the most documents come from the United Kingdom with 3 documents, followed by Malaysia with 2 documents. Meanwhile, other countries such as Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Taiwan each contributed 1 document. This distribution shows that countries with established innovation and entrepreneurship development systems such as the UK and Malaysia are quite active in producing literature related to MSME development. In the Indonesian context, this could be an important learning opportunity,

especially from countries like Malaysia that have similar economic and social characteristics. Successful MSME development approaches and strategies in these countries can be used as references in formulating policies, strengthening research collaboration, and increasing the capacity of MSME actors in Indonesia to compete globally.

The results obtained from the literature review regarding an in-depth understanding of reward management and performance motivation are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Review of Research literature**

No.	Author & Year	Title	Main Focus	Contribution to Reward, Management, Motivation in SMEs
1	Li, Rees & Branine (2019)	Employees' perceptions of HRM practices and outcomes	Employees' perceptions of HRM practices in Chinese SMEs	Explains the link between HRM, motivation, and work outcomes in SMEs
2	Řehoř & Vrchota (2018)	Remuneration in SMEs with project management	Remuneration in project management in SMEs	Focuses on reward and compensation systems in SME project management
3	Shafique & Beh (2016)	Role of leadership styles to promote innovation	Leadership styles and innovation	Provides insight into leadership styles that motivate innovation in SMEs
4	Ruiz-Lozano et al. (2019)	Characteristics and management of ethical codes	Management of ethical codes in organizations	Shows the impact of ethics management on employee behavior and motivation
5	Park et al. (2019)	Job retention and growth in engineering & IT SMEs	Job retention and growth in tech SMEs	Explains how retention management influences motivation and performance
6	Cagno et al. (2014)	Model of occupational safety in SMEs	Occupational safety performance	Links workplace safety to non-financial rewards and work motivation
7	Chen et al. (2013)	Evaluation of knowledge sharing intention	Knowledge sharing intentions in companies	Emphasizes the importance of motivation in employee knowledge sharing
8	Odrakiewicz et al. (2023)	Informal motivation & flexible management in Poland	Informal motivation and flexible management in Polish SMEs	Presents a model of informal rewards and adaptive management styles
9	Johnstone (2021)	Sustainability control in SMEs	Environmental management systems in SMEs	Explains how incentives and control systems support sustainable work behavior

10	Eze et al. (2013)	SMEs perspectives on knowledge sharing	SME perspectives on knowledge sharing	Focuses on reward systems and knowledge management as motivators
11	Xuan (2020)	Factors affecting knowledge sharing in Vietnamese SMEs	Knowledge sharing factors in Vietnamese SMEs	Analyzes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in knowledge sharing
12	By & Dale (2008)	Organisational change in tourism SMEs	Change management in the tourism sector	Role of motivation and management in supporting organizational change

Source: (By & Dale, 2008; Cagno et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2013; Eze et al., 2013; Johnstone, 2021; Li et al., 2019; Odrakiewicz et al., 2023; Park et al., 2019; Řehoř & Vrchota, 2018; Ruiz-Lozano et al., 2019; Shafique & Beh, 2016; Xuan, 2020)

## 4.2. Discussion

The Systematic Literature Review of 12 international journals reveals that human resource management practices, reward systems, and employee motivation play crucial roles in supporting the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Studies by Řehoř and Vrchota (2018) and Cagno et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of both financial and non-financial remuneration systems in enhancing motivation and productivity. For Indonesian SMEs, which often operate with limited resources and informal organizational structures, flexible reward approaches such as recognition, flexible working hours, or personal development opportunities prove particularly effective strategies that align with field realities.

Leadership style significantly contributes to SME success, as demonstrated by Li, Rees, and Branine (2019) and Shafique and Beh (2016), who found that participative and transformational leadership fosters innovation and job satisfaction. This finding holds special relevance for Indonesian SMEs where leadership often remains centralized and owner-experience based, highlighting the need for managerial training and leadership capacity building to ensure sustainable growth.

Work motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, emerges as another critical factor in creating productive work cultures. Chen et al. (2013) and Xuan (2020) underscore knowledge-sharing intention as a key motivation indicator that directly impacts business innovation and adaptation. For Indonesian SMEs, cultivating collaborative work environments that welcome input and foster employee ownership helps develop healthy, dynamic organizational cultures.

The review also confirms the importance of contextualizing management approaches to local cultural values. Ruiz-Lozano et al. (2019) and By and Dale (2008) maintain that work ethics and organizational changes must align with local social and cultural characteristics - particularly crucial in culturally diverse Indonesia. Consequently, SME management strategies emphasizing personal, ethical, and community-based approaches achieve better acceptance and internalization among workers.

The SLR collectively demonstrates that effective HR practices, adaptive reward systems, strong leadership, and contextual work motivation form essential foundations for SME advancement. For Indonesia, adopting and localizing these practices could enhance SME competitiveness both nationally and globally (Ajayi et al., 2024; Phung et al., 2023; Siverbo, 2023). Government and training institutions should therefore provide support through

managerial capacity building, incentive policies, and work culture strengthening to drive more professional, innovative, and sustainable SME transformation.

Reward frequency significantly influences employee motivation and performance, as frequent rewards reinforce desired behaviors through reinforcement theory (Camilleri et al., 2024; Mowbray et al., 2024; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). However, excessive frequency may cause satiation, particularly with tangible rewards, potentially diminishing their effectiveness. Optimal reward systems should consider three key elements: reward quantity quantification, employee notification processes, and distribution mechanisms.

The literature also highlights the value of group-based reward systems alongside individual rewards. Team rewards, awarded based on collective performance where each member's success depends on others' contributions (Alves et al., 2024; Holbrook & Chappell, 2019; Jiang et al., 2024; Maphanga et al., 2024), promote cooperation and coordination - especially for complex, interdependent tasks. The system's effectiveness depends on task types and the degree of team member interaction.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review of various international journals, it can be concluded that the successful management of MSMEs is strongly influenced by effective human resource management practices, adaptive reward systems, inspirational leadership, and high work motivation. These practices have been proven to increase productivity, loyalty and innovation in small and medium enterprises. In the Indonesian context, where most MSMEs are still traditionally managed and operate within limited resources, the application of these principles needs to be adapted to local characteristics, such as community work culture, managerial flexibility, and strong social values. Therefore, concrete support from government, academia, and training institutions is needed in the form of incentive policies, leadership training, and business management coaching. This approach is expected to help MSMEs in Indonesia to develop more professionally, adaptive to change, and able to compete at the national and global levels.

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