



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MEDIATES STRATEGIC HRM PRACTICES ON FRONTLINE SERVICE PERFORMANCE IN KENDARI

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Info Article Received : 01 April 2026 Revised : 05 Mei 2026 Accepted : 01 Juni 2026 Publication : 30 Juni 2026	Abstract: <i>This study examines the mediating role of employee engagement in the effect of strategic human resource management practices on frontline employee performance in service firms in Kendari City, Indonesia. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 110 non-managerial frontline employees selected through purposive sampling and analysed with partial least squares structural equation modelling. Strategic HRM practices were measured through recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation and rewards; engagement through vigour, dedication, and absorption; and performance through service quality, responsiveness, task completion, and cooperation. The results show that strategic HRM practices significantly influence both employee engagement and frontline performance, and that engagement partially mediates this relationship, with the indirect effect exceeding the direct effect. Engagement therefore functions as the principal mechanism converting HRM practices into service performance. Service firms should design HRM practices that sustain engagement at the customer interface, rather than mere procedural compliance</i>
Keywords: Strategic HRM Practices, Employee Engagement, Frontline Employee Performance, Service Firms Kata Kunci: Praktik MSDM Strategik, Keterikatan Karyawan, Kinerja Karyawan Garis Depan, Perusahaan Jasa	Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji peran mediasi keterikatan karyawan dalam pengaruh praktik manajemen sumber daya manusia strategik terhadap kinerja karyawan garis depan pada perusahaan jasa di Kota Kendari. Menggunakan desain kuantitatif eksplanatori, data dikumpulkan dari 110 karyawan garis depan non-manajerial yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling dan dianalisis dengan Structural Equation Modeling berbasis Partial Least Squares. Praktik MSDM strategik diukur melalui rekrutmen dan seleksi, pelatihan dan pengembangan, penilaian kinerja, serta kompensasi dan penghargaan; keterikatan melalui semangat, dedikasi, dan absorpsi; dan kinerja melalui kualitas layanan, daya tanggap, penyelesaian tugas, serta kerja sama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan praktik MSDM strategik berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keterikatan karyawan maupun kinerja garis depan, dan keterikatan memediasi hubungan tersebut secara parsial dengan pengaruh tidak langsung melampaui pengaruh langsung. Keterikatan karyawan dengan demikian merupakan mekanisme utama yang mengubah praktik MSDM menjadi kinerja layanan. Perusahaan jasa perlu merancang praktik MSDM yang menjaga keterikatan pada titik interaksi langsung dengan pelanggan, bukan sekadar kepatuhan prosedural.
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INTRODUCTION

The service sector is one of the main drivers of the Indonesian economy and absorbs a large share of the national workforce. The characteristics of services, namely intangibility, simultaneous production and consumption, and variability across providers, place frontline employees in a decisive position. Cashiers, waiters, receptionists, tellers, and customer service officers are the parties who deal directly with consumers, so that their behaviour and performance during service encounters become the tangible representation of the service quality a firm promises. In Kendari City, the capital of Southeast Sulawesi Province, the growth of hotels, restaurants and cafes, banking, modern retail, and beauty and health services has been considerable over the past decade, and competition among providers is increasingly determined by service quality rather than price alone. Nevertheless, the management of frontline employees in service firms in Kendari City still faces several problems. Employees in these positions generally bear a high emotional workload because they are required to display friendliness and patience regardless of their own emotional state, work irregular hours, and occupy the lowest level of the organisational structure with relatively limited compensation. These conditions contribute to high employee turnover, which disrupts the consistency of service quality while increasing recruitment and retraining costs. Such problems confirm that the success of service firms is determined not only by external marketing strategies but also by how firms manage the people who deliver the service.

Strategic human resource management practices offer one response to these problems. Strategic HRM is defined as the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals (Wright & McMahan, 1992). The concept emphasises alignment between employee management practices and the direction of firm strategy, represented in this study through four main practices: recruitment and selection as an effort to obtain employees with an appropriate service orientation, training and development as an investment in service competence, performance appraisal as a mechanism for feedback and behavioural direction, and compensation and rewards as a form of appreciation for employee contributions. The Resource-Based View positions human resources as assets that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and difficult to substitute, and therefore potentially a source of sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Huselid, 1995). In the service context, the service-profit chain framework asserts that the internal service quality provided to employees is the starting point that determines customer satisfaction and firm

performance (Heskett et al., 1994). Employee engagement is the psychological response that emerges when frontline employees perceive their firm's HRM practices positively. Employee engagement refers to a positive and meaningful motivational state at work, characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The Job Demands-Resources model explains that job resources provided by the organisation, including through HRM practices, serve as the main driver of engagement while also buffering high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In frontline work, engagement carries particular significance because employee energy and enthusiasm do not remain internal states but are transmitted to customers through tone of voice, facial expression, and willingness to help during the encounter. Salanova et al. (2005) show that the engagement of frontline employees spills over to customer perceptions of service climate and firm performance.

The outcome of both concepts is frontline employee performance, namely the qualitative and quantitative results achieved by employees in carrying out service duties in accordance with their assigned responsibilities. Bernardin and Russell (1993) define performance as the record of outcomes produced by a specific job function over a specified period. Given the interactive nature of frontline work, this study measures performance through four dimensions, namely service quality, service responsiveness, task completion, and cooperation, which together describe employee achievement at the point of contact with customers (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). The relationship among strategic HRM practices, employee engagement, and performance has attracted scholarly attention over recent decades. A number of classic studies show that HRM practices positively affect individual and organisational performance (Huselid, 1995; Delery & Doty, 1996). More recent research has shifted from merely establishing this relationship towards tracing the mechanisms that bridge it, and employee engagement has become the most frequently tested candidate mediator. Kavitha (2025) and Isah Leontes and Hoole (2024) find that work engagement mediates the effect of human resource and human capital management practices on performance, concluding that HRM practices alone are insufficient because engagement is the mechanism that drives performance. Similar findings are reported by Lal et al. (2026) among Indian executives, Payambarpour and Hooi (2015) in the talent management context, and Goyal et al. (2023), who confirm the consistency of the relationship between HRM practices and engagement across organisational settings.

In the frontline context, this empirical evidence becomes more specific. Vuong and Sid (2020) show that HRM practices increase the engagement of frontline employees in the Vietnamese banking industry, while Vuong (2022) finds that HRM practices encourage service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviours, with positive psychological capital strengthening the relationship. Khassawneh (2026) reports the same pattern in the hospitality industry and positions strategic HRM practices as a pathway to sustainable talent management, consistent with Karatepe (2013) on the mediation of work engagement in hotel employee performance. Saad et al. (2021) add a contextual dimension by showing that strategy implementation moderates the strength of the effect of HRM practices on engagement, while Deepa et al. (2025) highlight the role of well-structured HR system support in strengthening the engagement-performance relationship. In the Indonesian context, Abd Alla et al. (2024) obtain comparable findings among public service employees in Makassar, confirming the applicability of this mechanism to the work culture of eastern Indonesia.

Nevertheless, a review of these prior studies reveals two gaps. First, most studies were conducted in large service firms in metropolitan areas or in countries with well-established HRM systems, so few have tested whether the same mechanism operates in service firms in medium-sized cities where HRM practices remain partly semi-formal. Second, most studies measure performance in general terms and have not specifically employed performance dimensions relevant to the customer interface, such as service quality and responsiveness. No study of frontline employees in service firms in Kendari City was found in the available literature, and this gap is what the present study seeks to address. Based on the theoretical review and prior studies, this study proposes four hypotheses. First, strategic HRM practices positively affect frontline employee engagement, because supportive management practices provide job resources that foster energy, pride, and psychological involvement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Saks, 2006). Second, strategic HRM practices positively affect frontline employee performance, because such practices enhance employees' ability, motivation, and opportunity to deliver services to standard (Huselid, 1995; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Third, employee engagement positively affects frontline employee performance, because engaged employees exert greater effort, display higher responsiveness, and show service behaviours beyond formal requirements (Christian et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2005). Fourth, employee engagement mediates the effect of strategic HRM practices on frontline employee performance, because HRM practices operate through changes in employees'

psychological states before materialising in service outcomes (Saks, 2006; Alfes et al., 2013). This study aims to analyse these four relationships among frontline employees of service firms in Kendari City & to contribute theoretically to the strategic HRM & service management literature as well as practically to service firm managers in the region.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study aims to test hypotheses concerning causal relationships among strategic HRM practices, employee engagement, and frontline employee performance based on numerical data that can be measured objectively. The explanatory design is used to explain the effects and relationships among variables and to test previously developed theories in the context of service firms in Kendari City. The population of this study comprises all frontline employees of service firms in Kendari City, covering the subsectors of hotels and lodging, restaurants and cafes, banking and financial institutions, modern retail, and beauty and health services. Because the exact number of frontline employees across these subsectors is not available in official databases, the population is treated as unknown and the sample size was determined by reference to sample adequacy rules for SEM-PLS, namely a minimum of ten times the number of structural paths directed at a single construct, together with the recommended minimum of 100 respondents for models of moderate complexity. The study targeted 110 respondents to anticipate incomplete or invalid responses. Purposive sampling was applied with the following criteria: (1) employees working in service firms in Kendari City in frontline positions involving direct customer interaction; (2) holding non-managerial status without supervisory authority; (3) having worked at the firm for at least one year; and (4) willing to participate as respondents. The restriction to non-managerial employees was applied so that assessments of HRM practices and work engagement would come from those who are directly the targets of these practices.

This study involves three main variables. First, strategic HRM practices as the independent variable (X), measured through four dimensions: recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation and rewards, adapted from Delery and Doty (1996) and Huselid (1995). Second, employee engagement as the mediating variable (Z), measured through three dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption, adapted from Schaufeli et al. (2002) using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Third, frontline employee performance as the dependent variable (Y),

measured through four dimensions: service quality, service responsiveness, task completion, and cooperation, adapted from Hartline and Ferrell (1996) and Bernardin and Russell (1993). All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires to respondents. Data collection began with the development of the questionnaire instrument, followed by pilot testing with 30 respondents to examine validity and reliability. The questionnaire was then distributed online (Google Forms) and offline at respondents' workplaces outside peak service hours, with prior permission obtained from firm management. Respondent anonymity was guaranteed to reduce the tendency towards socially desirable responses.

Data analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares approach using SmartPLS version 4.0. This method was selected because it can analyse complex relationships among latent variables with multiple indicators simultaneously, performs effectively with relatively small samples, and can test mediating effects within a single model. The analytical stages comprised: (1) descriptive analysis of respondent characteristics; (2) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through convergent validity testing (loading factor > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50) and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion), as well as reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70); and (3) evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the hypotheses through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study successfully collected data from 110 frontline employees of service firms in Kendari City who met the research criteria. Respondent characteristics reveal several patterns relevant to this study. The predominance of female and younger respondents reflects the employment pattern of the service sector, which absorbs a large number of women of productive age into customer-facing positions that demand physical stamina and a high willingness to interact. The distribution of education, dominated by senior secondary and diploma graduates, is consistent with the qualification profile of frontline work, which emphasises interpersonal skills over formal educational attainment. Meanwhile, the concentration of tenure in the one to five year category indicates a relatively high turnover rate in frontline work, while also ensuring that respondents had worked long enough to assess the human resource management practices

at their workplace. All positions held by respondents involve a high intensity of customer contact and therefore correspond to the focus of this study.

Validity and Reliability Test Results

Convergent validity testing was conducted to assess the extent to which the indicators of each construct represent the latent variable being measured. Convergent validity was evaluated through loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE
Strategic HRM Practices	Recruitment and Selection	0.864	0.752
	Training and Development	0.887	
	Performance Appraisal	0.871	
	Compensation and Rewards	0.853	
Employee Engagement	Vigour	0.879	0.771
	Dedication	0.896	
	Absorption	0.861	
Frontline Employee Performance	Service Quality	0.893	0.782
	Service Responsiveness	0.885	
	Task Completion	0.868	
	Cooperation	0.877	

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

As shown in Table 1, all indicators across the three variables display loading factor values above the 0.70 threshold, ranging from 0.853 to 0.896. In addition, the AVE value of each construct exceeds 0.50. These results indicate that the research instrument has met the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X (Strategic HRM Practices)	0.918	0.922
Z (Employee Engagement)	0.901	0.905
Y (Frontline Employee Performance)	0.925	0.929

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

As shown in Table 2, all constructs have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70. This indicates that the research instrument possesses high internal consistency and is suitable for the subsequent stage of analysis.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

Evaluation of the structural model was conducted to test the causal relationships among latent variables. Hypothesis testing used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples at a 5% significance level. A summary of the test results is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Effect	Path Coef. (β)	t-statistic	p-value	Sig.	Result
Direct Effects						
H1.	SHRM (X) $\rightarrow$ EE (Z)	0.824	26.918	0	Sig.	Supported
H2.	SHRM (X) $\rightarrow$ FEP (Y)	0.262	3.145	0.002	Sig.	Supported
H3.	EE (Z) $\rightarrow$ FEP (Y)	0.658	7.612	0	Sig.	Supported
Indirect Effect (Mediation)						
H4.	SHRM (X) $\rightarrow$ EE (Z) $\rightarrow$ FEP (Y)	0.542	7.104	0	Sig.	Supported
Note: SHRM = Strategic HRM Practices (X); EE = Employee Engagement (Z); FEP = Frontline Employee Performance (Y)						

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

The test results in Table 3 show that Strategic HRM Practices (X) have a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement (Z), with a path coefficient of 0.824, a t-statistic of 26.918, and a p-value of 0.000 (H1 supported). This finding indicates that service firms applying planned human resource management tend to have frontline employees with higher levels of engagement, because such practices are perceived as a form of organisational support and appreciation. Strategic HRM Practices (X) also have a positive and significant effect on Frontline Employee Performance (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.262, a t-statistic of 3.145, and a p-value of 0.002 (H2 supported). Although this direct effect is significant, its magnitude is relatively moderate, indicating that strategic HRM practices influence service performance not only directly but also through the mediating mechanism of employee engagement.

Employee Engagement (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Frontline Employee Performance (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.658, a t-statistic of 7.612, and a p-value of 0.000 (H3 supported). This finding confirms that frontline employees with high vigour, dedication, and absorption deliver better service performance, including in terms of service quality, responsiveness to customer needs, task completion, and cooperation with colleagues. The indirect effect test shows that Strategic HRM Practices (X) have a positive and significant effect on Frontline Employee Performance (Y) through Employee Engagement (Z), with a path coefficient of 0.542, a t-statistic of 7.104, and a p-value of 0.000 (H4 supported). The magnitude of the indirect effect (0.542), which exceeds the direct effect (0.262), indicates that Employee Engagement is the principal mechanism strengthening the relationship between Strategic HRM Practices and Frontline Employee Performance. Because both the direct and indirect effects are significant, Employee Engagement functions as a partial mediator in this relationship.

Discussion

The Effect of Strategic HRM Practices on Frontline Employee Engagement

This study confirms that strategic HRM practices have a positive and significant effect on the engagement of frontline employees in service firms in Kendari City, with a path coefficient of considerable strength. The magnitude of this coefficient indicates that variation in employee engagement is largely explained by the extent to which firms manage their human resources in a planned manner. In other words, engagement in frontline work is not merely an innate individual trait but a logical consequence of how firms treat their employees on a daily basis. This result aligns with the theory and empirical findings of Saks (2006), Alfes et al. (2013), and Albrecht et al. (2015), and is reinforced by recent evidence in the service context. Vuong and Sid (2020) report a significant effect of HRM practices on the engagement of frontline banking employees in Vietnam, Khassawneh (2026) obtains similar results in the hospitality industry, and Goyal et al. (2023) demonstrate the consistency of this relationship across organisational settings. Saad et al. (2021) add the important caveat that the strength of this effect is moderated by the extent to which organisational strategy is genuinely implemented rather than merely formulated, a condition relevant to service firms in Kendari City that still operate HRM practices on a semi-formal basis.

In the context of service firms in Kendari City, the four HRM practices operate complementarily. Recruitment and selection that attend to the service orientation of candidates establish a basis of person-job fit from the outset. Training and development, whether through customer service training or direct on-the-job coaching, give employees a sense of growth as well as the skills to handle difficult customer situations. Performance appraisal accompanied by feedback clarifies expected service standards, while compensation and rewards perceived as fair, including recognition for outstanding service and humane scheduling, reinforce employees' sense of being valued. This set of practices essentially constitutes internal service quality as proposed by Heskett et al. (1994), and is consistent with the finding of Payambarpour and Hooi (2015) that planned talent management is a primary driver of employee engagement.

The Effect of Strategic HRM Practices on Frontline Employee Performance

The findings show that strategic HRM practices have a positive and significant direct effect on frontline employee performance, albeit with a relatively moderate coefficient. The significance of this relationship confirms that well-directed human

resource management holds strategic value in its own right, independent of the psychological state that accompanies it. Employees who are appropriately recruited, trained, appraised, and fairly compensated possess greater role clarity and competence to enact the firm's service standards. This result is consistent with the studies of Huselid (1995), Delery and Doty (1996), and Hartline and Ferrell (1996), which find a positive relationship between employee management practices and service performance. However, the relatively moderate magnitude of the coefficient warrants particular attention. It indicates that HRM practices are necessary but not sufficient, as concluded by Kavitha (2025) and Isah Leontes and Hoole (2024), who argue that human resource management practices are inadequate on their own because work engagement is the mechanism driving performance.

Neatly arranged service procedures and standards do not automatically produce high performance if employees enact them without psychological involvement. In service work this gap is readily apparent, because friendliness performed as mere procedural compliance is easily recognised by customers as insincere. The implication for service firms in Kendari City is clear. The design of recruitment, training, appraisal, and compensation mechanisms needs to be directed not merely at procedural fulfilment but at creating meaningful work experiences for frontline employees so that their impact on service performance becomes more substantial. This finding also provides the logical basis for the mediation test discussed in the following section.

The Effect of Employee Engagement on Frontline Employee Performance

Employee engagement exerts a strong and significant effect on the performance of frontline employees in service firms in Kendari City. This finding is in line with the research of Schaufeli et al. (2002), Christian et al. (2011), and Salanova et al. (2005), which position engagement as a primary determinant of work behaviour and outcomes. Theoretically, engaged employees devote greater physical, cognitive, and emotional energy to their roles, which directly improves the quality of customer interactions. Vuong (2022) specifically shows that engaged employees display more service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviours, namely acts of helping customers and colleagues beyond formal job requirements, which in frontline work are precisely what shape customer impressions. The strength of this effect can be explained through the four performance dimensions used in this study. High vigour sustains service responsiveness because employees can maintain a consistent level of energy through to the end of the

working day, including during peak hours. Dedication strengthens service quality because employees feel a personal responsibility for the customer experience rather than merely executing tasks. Absorption supports task completion because employees remain focused and are less easily distracted in a busy work environment, while engagement as a whole encourages cooperation through a willingness to assist colleagues when service demands increase.

In the context of service firms in Kendari City, employee engagement constitutes a highly valuable resource because services cannot be fully standardised. In restaurants, hotels, and retail outlets with intensive customer interaction, engaged employees are able to maintain consistent service quality without close supervision and are better able to handle customer complaints adaptively. These conditions reduce monitoring costs while lowering the risk of employee turnover, a longstanding problem in the service sector. The findings also support the proposition that the engagement of frontline employees is transmitted to customer perceptions of the firm's service climate. The consistency of these results with the findings of Abd Alla et al. (2024) among public service employees in Makassar indicates that this mechanism also applies to the work culture of eastern Indonesia, so that the present findings do not stand alone as a local anomaly.

The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

The most important finding of this study is the confirmation of the partial mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between strategic HRM practices and frontline employee performance. The partial rather than full nature of the mediation indicates that strategic HRM practices improve service performance through two concurrent pathways: a direct path through enhanced competence and role clarity, and an indirect path through strengthened engagement that subsequently improves performance. A comparison of the magnitude of these two pathways carries important substantive meaning. The indirect effect, which is considerably larger than the direct effect, confirms that employee engagement is the principal mechanism transforming strategic HRM practices into superior service performance. Strategic HRM practices are therefore more appropriately understood as an enabling capability that creates structural preconditions and competence, whereas employee engagement functions as a transforming capability that converts those preconditions into tangible effort perceived by customers during the service encounter.

This finding is consistent with Saks (2006) and Karatepe (2013), who position engagement as a critical mediator in the relationship between organisational practices and frontline employee outcomes, and aligns with recent evidence from Lal et al. (2026), Kavitha (2025), and Isah Leontes and Hoole (2024), who consistently obtain similar mediation patterns across organisational contexts. Khassawneh (2026) further positions this mechanism as a pathway to sustainable talent management, since engagement not only improves short-term performance but also reduces employees' turnover intentions. This study extends the applicability of the proposition to service firms in a medium-sized city in a developing region, a setting hitherto underrepresented in the literature. At the same time, the partial nature of the mediation shows that employee engagement is not the sole channel; other pathways such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, service climate, or employee empowerment may also mediate the relationship and could form an agenda for further research.

Practically, this means that the implementation of HRM practices in service firms needs to be designed with attention to the psychological experience of frontline employees in order to improve service performance effectively. Firms with well-organised standard operating procedures that fail to cultivate employee vigour and dedication will forgo much of the potential impact on performance. For service firm managers, this finding suggests that investment in service training and remuneration systems should be complemented by attention to the quality of working relationships, workload arrangements, and recognition of employee contributions. Deepa et al. (2025) show that well-structured HR system support, including the use of simple information technology for scheduling and performance records, can strengthen the relationship between engagement and performance, an opportunity that remains widely open to service firms in Kendari City.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study arrives at several important conclusions. First, strategic HRM practices have a positive and significant effect on the engagement of frontline employees in service firms in Kendari City, with a substantial magnitude. This shows that firms applying service-oriented recruitment and selection, continuous training and development, performance appraisal accompanied by feedback, and compensation and rewards perceived as fair will have employees with higher levels of engagement. Second, strategic HRM practices have a positive and significant effect

on frontline employee performance, although the direct effect is moderate in magnitude. Third, employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on frontline employee performance, with a stronger effect than the direct effect of strategic HRM practices. Fourth, employee engagement is shown to partially mediate the effect of strategic HRM practices on frontline employee performance, with an indirect effect larger than the direct effect, confirming the central role of employee engagement as the mechanism transforming strategic HRM practices into improved service performance. The practical implication of this study is that service firms in Kendari City need to develop strategic HRM practices integrated with systematic efforts to cultivate frontline employee engagement. Managers are advised to conduct selection based on service orientation, provide regular training in service delivery and complaint handling, offer constructive performance feedback, design financial and non-financial reward schemes perceived as fair, and manage workloads and schedules so that the emotional demands of frontline work remain manageable. This study has limitations in its use of self-rated performance measures and a cross-sectional design; future research is therefore advised to employ supervisor ratings or customer data & longitudinal designs to strengthen causal inference.

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