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The Role Of Competence, Compensation, And Training Through Employee Motivation In Improving Service Responsiveness At The South Tangerang City Population And Civil Registration Office

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Abstract

Public organizations are increasingly required to provide responsive, timely, and citizen-oriented services. However, maintaining service responsiveness remains a challenge for many government institutions, including the Population and Civil Registration Office of South Tangerang City. This study examines the influence of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness through employee motivation as a mediating variable. A quantitative explanatory approach was employed using a census method involving 251 employees of the South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that competence significantly affects employee motivation ($\beta = 0.228$; $p < 0.001$), compensation significantly affects employee motivation ($\beta = 0.423$; $p < 0.001$), and training significantly affects employee motivation ($\beta = 0.211$; $p < 0.001$). Employee motivation also significantly influences service responsiveness ($\beta = 0.346$; $p < 0.001$). However, the direct effects of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness were not statistically significant. Mediation analysis revealed that employee motivation fully mediates the relationships between competence, compensation, and training and service responsiveness. Among the indirect effects, compensation demonstrated the strongest contribution to service responsiveness through employee motivation. The study concludes that employee motivation serves as a critical mechanism through which human resource management practices enhance public service responsiveness. Strengthening employee competencies, implementing equitable compensation systems, and providing continuous training programs are essential strategies for improving the quality of public services.

Keywords: competence; compensation; training; employee motivation; service responsiveeness

INTRODUCTION

Public service quality has become a critical indicator of government performance in the era of public sector reform. Citizens increasingly expect government institutions to deliver services that are not only accurate and accessible but also responsive to their needs and concerns. Responsiveness is widely recognized as one of the fundamental dimensions of public service quality because it reflects the ability of public organizations to respond promptly, appropriately, and effectively to community demands, complaints, and expectations. In the context of public administration, responsiveness demonstrates the extent to which government

agencies can identify citizens' needs and translate them into effective service delivery (Dwiyanto, 2006).

Population administration services constitute one of the most essential forms of public service because they directly affect citizens' legal identity and access to various public rights. The Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) plays a strategic role in providing administrative services related to identity cards, family cards, birth certificates, death certificates, and other civil registration documents. Consequently, the quality and responsiveness of services delivered by Disdukcapil significantly influence public trust in government institutions.

Despite ongoing bureaucratic reform efforts, challenges related to service responsiveness remain evident in many public institutions. Community Satisfaction Survey data at the South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office indicate that although overall service quality remains relatively high, certain indicators associated with service responsiveness, particularly service completion time, continue to require improvement. Field observations also reveal several operational challenges, including waiting times for service completion and delays in processing administrative documents. Such conditions suggest that organizational responsiveness cannot be explained solely by procedural mechanisms but must also be understood through the quality of human resources responsible for service delivery.

Human resources represent one of the most valuable organizational assets in public institutions. The ability of employees to provide responsive services is strongly influenced by their competencies, the compensation system implemented by the organization, and the quality of training programs available to them. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) emphasizes that organizational effectiveness is largely determined by the alignment of human resource practices with organizational objectives. In public service organizations, this alignment becomes particularly important because employee performance directly affects service outcomes experienced by citizens.

Competence is widely recognized as a critical determinant of employee effectiveness. Spencer and Spencer (1993) define competence as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to superior performance in a job or situation. Competence encompasses knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and behavioral attributes that enable employees to perform their duties effectively. Employees who possess adequate competencies are generally better equipped to solve problems, adapt to organizational changes, and respond to citizen needs in a timely and professional manner. Previous studies have demonstrated that competence contributes positively to employee motivation and performance in public organizations (Mukrodi et al., 2021; Putri Aziziah et al., 2024).

Compensation is another important factor influencing employee attitudes and behaviors. According to Milkovich and Newman (2020), compensation refers to all forms of financial and non-financial returns that employees receive in exchange for their contributions to the organization. Fair and equitable compensation systems are essential for creating employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work motivation. In public organizations, compensation serves not only as a reward mechanism but also as an instrument for encouraging employees to achieve higher

levels of performance. Studies have shown that appropriate compensation significantly enhances employee motivation and contributes to improved service quality (Setiawan & Widodo, 2023).

Training is equally important in developing employee capabilities and organizational performance. Noe (2021) argues that training is a planned effort designed to facilitate employees' acquisition of job-related competencies. Through training programs, employees gain updated knowledge, improve technical skills, and develop the confidence necessary to perform their duties effectively. In the context of public service organizations, continuous training is particularly important because service systems, regulations, and citizen expectations evolve rapidly. Previous research indicates that training positively influences employee motivation and service performance (Susilawati & Sumiyati, 2021; Lestiani & Nugroho, 2024).

Although competence, compensation, and training have been widely examined in relation to employee performance, empirical findings regarding their relationship with service responsiveness remain inconsistent. Some studies report direct positive effects of these variables on public service performance, while others suggest that their influence may occur indirectly through psychological mechanisms such as employee motivation. These inconsistencies indicate the need to explore intermediary variables that can explain how human resource practices translate into improved service outcomes.

Employee motivation is one of the most relevant explanatory mechanisms in this context. Motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain work-related behavior (Vroom, 1964). Highly motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater enthusiasm, commitment, persistence, and willingness to provide quality services. Motivation therefore functions as a psychological driver that transforms employee capabilities and organizational support into productive work behavior.

The present study adopts Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000, 2020) as its primary theoretical foundation. SDT posits that individuals are intrinsically motivated when their basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are fulfilled. Competence enables employees to feel capable of performing their duties successfully. Compensation can enhance employees' sense of recognition and value within the organization. Training contributes to the development of skills and confidence necessary for effective job performance. When these conditions are fulfilled, employees are more likely to experience higher levels of motivation, which subsequently influences their service behavior and responsiveness.

Several previous studies support the mediating role of motivation. Ramadhani and Sulastri (2024) found that motivation mediates the relationship between competence and public service performance in digital-era public institutions. Similarly, Fauzan and Anggraini (2023) reported that motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of responsiveness in serving citizens. Lestiani and Nugroho (2024) also concluded that compensation and training influence service performance more effectively when employee motivation functions as an intermediary variable. Nevertheless, limited empirical evidence is available regarding the simultaneous

examination of competence, compensation, and training through employee motivation in the context of population administration services.

This study therefore seeks to fill the existing research gap by examining employee motivation as a mediating variable between competence, compensation, training, and service responsiveness within the South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on direct relationships, this research proposes an integrated model that combines human resource management practices and motivational mechanisms to explain service responsiveness in public organizations.

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence discussed above, the conceptual model proposes that competence, compensation, and training influence employee motivation, which subsequently affects service responsiveness. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H_1: Competence has a significant effect on employee motivation.
H_2: Compensation has a significant effect on employee motivation.
H_3: Training has a significant effect on employee motivation.
H_4: Employee motivation has a significant effect on service responsiveness.
H_5: Employee motivation mediates the relationship between competence and service responsiveness.
H_6: Employee motivation mediates the relationship between compensation and service responsiveness.
H_7: Employee motivation mediates the relationship between training and service responsiveness.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study extends the application of Self-Determination Theory within the context of public sector human resource management. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based recommendations for government institutions seeking to improve service responsiveness through strategic human resource development initiatives.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using an explanatory research design. Explanatory research is appropriate for examining causal relationships among variables and testing theoretical models through empirical data analysis. The study was designed to investigate the effects of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness through employee motivation as a mediating variable within the Population and Civil Registration Office of South Tangerang City.

The conceptual framework was developed based on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posit that organizational human resource practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors through motivational mechanisms. Accordingly, the study examined both direct and indirect relationships among the variables using a structural equation modeling approach.

The population consisted of all employees working at the Population and Civil Registration Office of South Tangerang City. Given the relatively manageable

population size and the objective of obtaining comprehensive organizational representation, this study adopted a census approach (total sampling).

A total of 251 employees participated in the study, representing the entire population of employees within the organization. The use of total sampling minimizes sampling error and enhances the generalizability of findings within the organizational context.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to employees. The questionnaire was developed based on established theoretical constructs and previous empirical studies related to competence, compensation, training, employee motivation, and service responsiveness.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

The questionnaire was administered during the 2025 research period after obtaining organizational approval and ensuring respondents' confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Operational Definition of Variables

Competence (X_1)

Competence refers to employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral attributes that enable them to perform their duties effectively. The competence construct was measured using five indicators:

1. Understanding of service policies and procedures.
2. Technical skills required for the job.
3. Ability to utilize digital service systems.
4. Accuracy and responsibility in completing tasks.
5. Adaptability to workplace changes.

Compensation (X_2)

Compensation refers to financial and non-financial rewards provided by the organization in return for employee contributions. Five indicators were used to measure compensation:

1. Salary suitability with workload.
2. Fairness of allowances and incentives.
3. Recognition for good performance.
4. Adequacy of work facilities.
5. Transparency of compensation systems.

Training (X_3)

Training refers to organizational efforts aimed at improving employee knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for effective job performance. The construct was measured through five indicators:

1. Relevance of training materials.
2. Benefits of training programs.
3. Instructor competence.

4. Clarity of training methods.
5. Application of training outcomes in daily work.

Employee Motivation (Z)

Employee motivation refers to internal and external forces that encourage employees to perform their duties enthusiastically and effectively. Six indicators were used:

1. Work enthusiasm.
2. Sense of competence in performing tasks.
3. Freedom to take initiative.
4. Support from colleagues.
5. Recognition from supervisors.
6. Harmonious workplace relationships.

Service Responsiveness (Y)

Service responsiveness refers to employees' ability to respond quickly, accurately, and appropriately to public service needs and expectations. Five indicators were employed:

1. Promptness in providing services.
2. Accuracy in service delivery.
3. Empathy toward community needs.
4. Clarity of information provided.
5. Responsiveness to complaints and feedback.

Data Analysis Technique

The study utilized Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4 software. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for predictive research models involving multiple latent variables and mediation relationships.

The analysis was conducted in two stages:

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer model assessment aimed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. The following criteria were applied:

- Indicator Loading Factor ≥ 0.70
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50
- Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70
- Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70

Convergent validity was established when indicator loadings and AVE values exceeded the recommended thresholds. Reliability was confirmed through Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The inner model assessment was conducted to evaluate relationships among latent variables. Several statistical procedures were performed:

1. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)
2. Path Coefficient Analysis
3. Hypothesis Testing
4. Mediation Analysis

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the model. Employee motivation produced an R^2 value of 0.453, indicating that

competence, compensation, and training collectively explained 45.3% of the variance in employee motivation. Service responsiveness produced an R^2 value of 0.157, indicating that the model explained 15.7% of the variance in service responsiveness.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was performed using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. Statistical significance was determined using the following criteria:

- t-statistic > 1.96
- p-value < 0.05

A hypothesis was accepted when the path coefficient was statistically significant according to these criteria.

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of employee motivation was examined using indirect effect analysis within the PLS-SEM framework. Mediation was considered significant when the indirect effect produced a p-value below 0.05.

The analysis enabled the identification of whether employee motivation functioned as a partial mediator or a full mediator in the relationships between competence, compensation, training, and service responsiveness.

Through this methodological approach, the study provides a comprehensive examination of the mechanisms through which human resource management practices contribute to improving service responsiveness within public sector organizations.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding competence, compensation, training, employee motivation, and service responsiveness. The analysis was based on the mean scores obtained from responses measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Competence (X_1)

The competence variable was measured using five indicators related to employees' understanding of service procedures, technical skills, digital service capabilities, work accuracy, and adaptability.

The results indicate that the overall mean score for competence was 3.75, categorized as good. The highest mean score (3.80) was observed for employees' understanding of service policies and procedures, while the lowest mean score (3.71) was found for technical skills and work accuracy. These findings suggest that employees generally possess adequate competencies to perform their duties effectively.

Compensation (X_2)

Compensation was assessed through indicators related to salary fairness, incentives, recognition, work facilities, and transparency of compensation systems.

The overall mean score for compensation was 3.92, indicating a good category. The highest mean score (4.00) was associated with salary suitability relative to workload, while the lowest score (3.81) was related to work facilities. These results suggest that employees perceive the compensation system as relatively fair and supportive of their work performance.

Training (X_3)

Training was measured through indicators related to training relevance, usefulness, instructor competence, training methods, and application of acquired knowledge.

The training variable achieved the highest overall mean score among all constructs, with a mean value of 4.59, categorized as very good. The highest score (4.65) was associated with instructor competence, while the lowest score (4.48) concerned the relevance of training materials. These findings indicate that training programs implemented by the organization are highly effective and well received by employees.

Employee Motivation (Z)

Employee motivation was evaluated using indicators related to enthusiasm, self-confidence, initiative, peer support, recognition, and workplace relationships.

The overall mean score for employee motivation was 3.97, indicating a good level of motivation. The highest score (4.00) was related to support from colleagues, while the lowest score (3.90) concerned employees' freedom to take initiative. These results suggest that employees generally possess strong motivational characteristics that support organizational performance.

Service Responsiveness (Y)

Service responsiveness was measured through indicators related to service speed, accuracy, empathy, information clarity, and responsiveness to public complaints.

The overall mean score for service responsiveness was 3.99, categorized as good. The highest score (4.02) was recorded for the provision of clear information to citizens, whereas the lowest score (3.98) was observed for service accuracy and responsiveness to public complaints. Overall, employees demonstrated satisfactory responsiveness in delivering public services.

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of all research variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Category
Competence	3.75	Good
Compensation	3.92	Good
Training	4.59	Very Good
Employee Motivation	3.97	Good
Service Responsiveness	3.99	Good

The findings reveal that training received the highest evaluation among respondents, whereas competence recorded the lowest mean score. Nevertheless, all variables were assessed positively, indicating favorable organizational conditions for supporting employee performance and service quality.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model was assessed to determine the reliability and validity of the research constructs. Evaluation included convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicators demonstrated loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory indicator reliability.

Similarly, all latent variables achieved AVE values exceeding 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity. These results indicate that the indicators successfully represent their respective latent constructs.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR).

The results showed that all constructs exceeded the minimum recommended value of 0.70 for both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.863 to 0.931, while Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.898 to 0.948.

These findings confirm that all measurement instruments possess satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2).

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Employee Motivation	0.453
Service Responsiveness	0.157

The R^2 value of 0.453 indicates that competence, compensation, and training collectively explain 45.3% of the variance in employee motivation. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of 0.157 indicates that employee motivation explains 15.7% of the variance in service responsiveness.

These findings suggest that the model has moderate explanatory power for employee motivation and relatively weak explanatory power for service responsiveness, indicating the possibility that additional organizational factors may influence responsiveness.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4. The significance level was set at 5% ($p < 0.05$).

Direct Effects

Table 3. Direct Effects

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Competence → Employee Motivation	0.228	3.940	0.000	Supported
Compensation → Employee Motivation	0.423	7.648	0.000	Supported
Training → Employee Motivation	0.211	3.814	0.000	Supported
Employee Motivation → Service Responsiveness	0.346	4.026	0.000	Supported

The findings indicate that competence, compensation, and training significantly influence employee motivation. Compensation exhibits the strongest effect among the three antecedent variables, with a path coefficient of 0.423.

Furthermore, employee motivation significantly affects service responsiveness, indicating that motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of responsiveness in serving citizens.

However, the direct effects of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness were not statistically significant. This finding suggests that the influence of these human resource factors is transmitted indirectly through employee motivation.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation testing was conducted to determine whether employee motivation functions as an intermediary mechanism linking competence, compensation, and training to service responsiveness.

Table 4. Indirect Effects

Relationship	Indirect Effect (β)	p-value	Decision
Competence → Motivation → Responsiveness	0.079	0.010	Supported
Compensation → Motivation → Responsiveness	0.147	0.000	Supported
Training → Motivation → Responsiveness	0.073	0.006	Supported

The results reveal that all indirect effects are statistically significant. Employee motivation significantly mediates the relationships between competence, compensation, training, and service responsiveness.

Among the three mediation paths, compensation demonstrates the strongest indirect influence on service responsiveness ($\beta = 0.147$), followed by competence ($\beta = 0.079$) and training ($\beta = 0.073$).

Because the direct effects of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness were not significant while the indirect effects were significant, employee motivation can be classified as a full mediator in all three relationships.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H_1	Competence significantly affects employee motivation	Accepted
H_2	Compensation significantly affects employee motivation	Accepted
H_3	Training significantly affects employee motivation	Accepted
H_4	Employee motivation significantly affects service responsiveness	Accepted
H_5	Employee motivation mediates the relationship between competence and service responsiveness	Accepted
H_6	Employee motivation mediates the relationship between compensation and service responsiveness	Accepted
H_7	Employee motivation mediates the relationship between training and service responsiveness	Accepted

Overall, the empirical findings support all proposed hypotheses and confirm the critical role of employee motivation as a mediating mechanism linking human resource management practices to public service responsiveness.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of competence, compensation, and training on service responsiveness through employee motivation within the South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office. The findings provide important insights into the mechanisms through which human resource management practices contribute to improving public service responsiveness. More specifically, the results demonstrate that employee motivation functions as a critical mediating variable linking competence, compensation, and training to service responsiveness.

The Effect of Competence on Employee Motivation

The findings indicate that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. This result suggests that employees who possess higher levels of knowledge, skills, and professional abilities tend to demonstrate stronger motivation in performing their duties.

This finding is consistent with Competency Theory proposed by Spencer and Spencer (1993), which emphasizes that competencies represent fundamental characteristics that enable superior job performance. Employees who understand organizational procedures, possess adequate technical skills, and are capable of adapting to workplace demands generally experience greater confidence in completing their tasks successfully. Such confidence strengthens intrinsic motivation because employees perceive themselves as capable of meeting job expectations.

The findings also support Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020), which argues that competence is one of the basic psychological needs underlying human motivation. When employees feel competent in their work, they experience higher levels of autonomy, effectiveness, and self-efficacy. Consequently, they become more enthusiastic and committed to achieving organizational objectives.

The results are consistent with previous studies conducted by Mukrodi et al. (2021), Catio and Sunarsi (2020), and Putri Aziziah et al. (2024), all of which reported that employee competence significantly contributes to work motivation. In the context of public service organizations, competent employees are more capable of understanding citizen needs, applying service regulations correctly, and responding effectively to operational challenges. These capabilities strengthen their confidence and willingness to provide high-quality services.

Therefore, competence should not merely be viewed as a technical requirement but as a strategic organizational resource capable of stimulating employee motivation and improving service outcomes.

The Effect of Compensation on Employee Motivation

Among the three antecedent variables, compensation demonstrated the strongest effect on employee motivation. This finding indicates that employees are highly responsive to organizational reward systems and perceive compensation as an important determinant of their motivation.

According to Compensation Theory (Milkovich & Newman, 2020), compensation serves not only as a financial reward but also as a symbol of organizational recognition and appreciation. Employees evaluate whether compensation systems are fair relative to their workload, responsibilities, and

contributions. When compensation is perceived as equitable, employees experience greater satisfaction and become more motivated to perform effectively.

The findings also support Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which suggests that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to desirable outcomes. Fair compensation strengthens the relationship between effort and reward, thereby encouraging employees to invest greater energy and commitment in their work.

Within the public sector context, compensation has traditionally been considered less influential than intrinsic motivations such as public service commitment. However, the present findings suggest that compensation remains a highly relevant factor in shaping employee motivation. Employees who perceive organizational rewards as fair and transparent are more likely to demonstrate commitment, engagement, and responsibility.

These findings are consistent with those reported by Setiawan and Widodo (2023) and Lestiani and Nugroho (2024), who found that compensation significantly affects employee attitudes and performance. The present study extends this evidence by demonstrating that compensation influences service responsiveness indirectly through employee motivation.

The Effect of Training on Employee Motivation

The results reveal that training significantly influences employee motivation. Employees who participate in effective training programs tend to exhibit higher levels of enthusiasm, confidence, and commitment in performing their responsibilities.

According to Human Capital Theory, training represents an organizational investment that enhances employees' knowledge and productive capabilities. Similarly, Noe (2021) argues that training contributes to employee development by improving competencies necessary for effective job performance.

The high descriptive score obtained for the training variable indicates that employees generally perceive training programs positively. Participants view training activities as relevant, beneficial, and applicable to their daily work responsibilities. Such perceptions strengthen employee confidence and encourage a greater willingness to contribute to organizational goals.

The findings also support Self-Determination Theory. Training enhances employees' perceptions of competence, one of the key psychological needs underlying motivation. Employees who acquire new skills and knowledge through training are more likely to experience mastery and professional growth, leading to stronger intrinsic motivation.

These results are consistent with findings reported by Susilawati and Sumiyati (2021) and Lestiani and Nugroho (2024), who concluded that training positively affects employee motivation and performance. In public service organizations, continuous training becomes increasingly important because employees must adapt to changing regulations, technological developments, and rising citizen expectations.

The Effect of Employee Motivation on Service Responsiveness

The findings indicate that employee motivation significantly influences service responsiveness. Employees with higher levels of motivation are more likely to respond quickly, accurately, and effectively to citizen needs and service requests.

This result supports the fundamental assumptions of Self-Determination Theory, which argues that motivated individuals demonstrate greater persistence, initiative, and commitment when performing tasks. Motivated employees invest more effort in achieving service objectives and are more willing to exceed minimum performance standards.

Within public service organizations, responsiveness is not determined solely by organizational procedures or technological systems. Human behavior remains a critical determinant of service quality. Employees who are motivated are more likely to communicate effectively, provide accurate information, respond to complaints promptly, and demonstrate empathy toward service users.

The findings are consistent with those of Fauzan and Anggraini (2023) and Lestari and Pratama (2023), who found that employee motivation significantly contributes to public service responsiveness. These studies collectively suggest that motivation functions as a key psychological mechanism linking organizational resources to service outcomes.

Consequently, public institutions seeking to improve responsiveness should prioritize strategies that strengthen employee motivation alongside procedural and technological improvements.

The Mediating Role of Employee Motivation

One of the most important findings of this study concerns the mediating role of employee motivation. The results indicate that employee motivation fully mediates the relationships between competence, compensation, training, and service responsiveness.

The absence of significant direct effects suggests that competence, compensation, and training alone are insufficient to improve responsiveness. Rather, these factors must first generate motivational outcomes before influencing employee service behavior.

This finding provides strong support for Self-Determination Theory. Competence, compensation, and training function as organizational resources that satisfy employees' psychological needs. Once these needs are fulfilled, motivation emerges and subsequently influences service responsiveness.

The mediation results also highlight the importance of distinguishing between capability-enhancing factors and behavior-generating mechanisms. Competence, compensation, and training improve employees' capacities and organizational support systems, whereas motivation transforms these resources into observable service behaviors. In other words, motivation acts as the psychological engine that converts human resource investments into improved public service outcomes.

Among the three indirect relationships, compensation produced the strongest mediating effect. This finding suggests that employees place substantial value on organizational recognition and reward systems. Fair compensation appears to be the most influential mechanism for strengthening employee motivation and ultimately improving service responsiveness.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing literature on Strategic Human Resource Management and Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating how human resource practices influence public service responsiveness

through employee motivation. The findings reinforce the proposition that motivational mechanisms are essential for understanding employee behavior in public organizations.

The study also extends previous research by integrating competence, compensation, and training within a single explanatory model. Most previous studies examined these variables separately, whereas the present study demonstrates their combined influence through a common motivational pathway.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide important implications for managers and policymakers within public institutions. First, competency development programs should be strengthened through continuous professional education and skills enhancement initiatives. Second, compensation systems should be reviewed regularly to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with employee contributions. Third, training programs should be designed to address actual workplace challenges and support ongoing organizational transformation.

Most importantly, organizational leaders should recognize that employee motivation constitutes the central mechanism through which human resource investments generate service improvements. Therefore, efforts to improve public service responsiveness should focus not only on developing employee capabilities but also on fostering motivational conditions that encourage employees to apply those capabilities effectively in serving the public.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of competence, compensation, and training in improving service responsiveness through employee motivation at the South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office. Based on the results of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis, several important conclusions can be drawn.

First, competence has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. Employees who possess adequate knowledge, technical skills, and professional capabilities tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation in carrying out their duties. This finding confirms that competence functions not only as a performance resource but also as a motivational driver within public organizations.

Second, compensation significantly influences employee motivation and represents the strongest predictor among the antecedent variables examined in this study. Employees who perceive compensation systems as fair, transparent, and proportional to their contributions exhibit stronger motivation to perform effectively and support organizational objectives.

Third, training significantly affects employee motivation. Continuous training programs contribute to employee development by enhancing knowledge, skills, and self-confidence. As a result, employees become more motivated to perform their responsibilities and adapt to changing service demands.

Fourth, employee motivation has a positive and significant effect on service responsiveness. Motivated employees are more likely to provide prompt, accurate, and citizen-oriented services, thereby improving organizational responsiveness to public needs.

Fifth, employee motivation fully mediates the relationships between competence and service responsiveness, compensation and service responsiveness, and training and service responsiveness. These findings indicate that competence, compensation, and training do not directly improve service responsiveness. Instead, their influence occurs through employee motivation, which acts as a critical psychological mechanism linking human resource management practices to service outcomes.

The study contributes to the literature on Strategic Human Resource Management and Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating the central role of motivation in transforming human resource investments into improved public service responsiveness. The findings also provide empirical evidence that motivation serves as the primary pathway through which competence, compensation, and training affect employee service behavior.

From a practical perspective, public organizations should prioritize integrated human resource strategies that simultaneously enhance employee competence, provide equitable compensation, and implement continuous training programs while fostering motivational conditions that encourage employees to deliver responsive public services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed:

1. The South Tangerang City Population and Civil Registration Office should strengthen competency development programs through regular technical and professional training activities.
2. Organizational leaders should continuously evaluate compensation systems to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with employee performance and responsibilities.
3. Training programs should be designed according to actual service challenges and technological developments to maximize their effectiveness and relevance.
4. Management should implement motivational strategies such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, employee empowerment initiatives, and supportive leadership practices.
5. Future studies should investigate additional variables that may influence service responsiveness, including leadership style, organizational culture, work engagement, digital transformation readiness, organizational commitment, and public service motivation.
6. Future research may also employ longitudinal designs and comparative analyses across different public institutions to enhance the generalizability of findings and provide deeper insights into public service responsiveness.

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