

Job Demands and Service Performance in Hotel Front Office Operations: The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction

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Hotel front office employees operate in high-contact service environments where workload, time pressure, and continuous guest interaction generate substantial job demands, making service performance a critical operational concern. This study examines the effect of job demands on service performance, with employee satisfaction as a mediating variable. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective, a quantitative survey was conducted among 200 front office employees in star-rated hotels in Indonesia. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. The results show that job demands have a significant negative effect on both employee satisfaction and service performance. In addition, employee satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance. These findings indicate that service performance is shaped not only by operational pressures but also by employees' attitudinal responses to demanding work conditions. This study contributes by contextualizing job demands within front office operations and clarifying the mechanism through which operational pressure is translated into service outcomes. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of managing workload and sustaining employee satisfaction.

Keywords: Employee Satisfaction; Front Office Operations; Job Demands; Service Performance; PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Hotel front office operations are central to hotel service delivery because they constitute one of the most visible and continuous points of contact between guests and the hotel. Front office employees are responsible not only for check-in and check-out procedures but also for reservations coordination, guest inquiries, complaint handling, interdepartmental communication, and service recovery. These responsibilities position front office work as a high-contact service function in which operational accuracy, responsiveness, and interpersonal performance must be maintained simultaneously. In such settings, service performance is not merely a technical outcome but a relational and situational one, shaped by how employees manage interactions under demanding service conditions (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000; Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Recent empirical studies further confirm that front office service quality significantly influences guest satisfaction and overall service experience, particularly through responsiveness, reliability, and interpersonal communication during service encounters (Alhassan et al., 2024; Dewi et al., 2025).

The importance of front office service performance has become more pronounced in the context of tourism recovery and increasing service demand. Globally, international tourism reached an estimated 1.52 billion arrivals in 2025, exceeding pre-pandemic levels and indicating a strong rebound in travel activity (UN Tourism, 2026). In Indonesia, Statistics Indonesia reported that international visitor arrivals reached 1.41 million in December 2025, domestic trips reached 105.98 million, and the room occupancy rate of star-rated hotels reached 56.12 percent (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2026). These trends suggest that hotels are operating under intensified service conditions, where front office employees must respond to fluctuating occupancy levels, time-sensitive service encounters, and increasingly diverse guest expectations. Recent hospitality studies further indicate that increased service demand and operational pressure are closely associated with higher workload, emotional strain, and variability in service performance among frontline employees, particularly in high-contact service roles (Jiang et al., 2023; Alzyoud, 2024). In this context, front office performance becomes increasingly contingent on employees' ability to manage service pressure, interpersonal demands, and service recovery situations simultaneously.

While increased demand strengthens the role of front office operations, it also intensifies the job demands placed on employees. In hospitality settings, job demands often include workload pressure, time constraints, emotional regulation, and continuous guest interaction, all of which require sustained effort and may create psychological strain. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory conceptualizes job demands as aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort and are associated with certain costs, particularly when not balanced by adequate resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

More recent developments in JD-R research highlight that job demands influence performance not only directly but also through employee well-being and motivational processes (Bakker, 2023). Empirical evidence in the hospitality sector further supports this mechanism. For instance, Rosalie et al. (2025) found that job demands significantly affect employee performance indirectly through psychological mechanisms such as burnout and psychological well-being in hotel settings, indicating that the impact of job demands is often transmitted through intermediate attitudinal or psychological states. Within this framework, employee satisfaction becomes a key mechanism through which job demands may shape service outcomes, as it reflects employees' overall evaluation of their work conditions and their capacity to cope with job-related pressures.

Empirical research in hospitality has established that employee satisfaction plays an important role in shaping service performance. Studies have shown that employee satisfaction is positively associated with service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance in high-contact service industries (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Yee et al., 2008). In the hotel context, job stress has been found to negatively affect employee satisfaction and performance, indicating that operational pressures directly shape service outcomes (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021). Similarly, employee satisfaction has been shown to play a critical role in improving service quality in hotel operations, reinforcing its importance as a driver of service performance (Rihayana et al., 2021). Beyond the hospitality sector, recent evidence also demonstrates that employee well-being or satisfaction can mediate the relationship between work-related stress and performance outcomes (Mohyi et al., 2024).

Building on this foundation, more recent studies grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective provide further support for the role of employee satisfaction as a mechanism linking work conditions and performance outcomes. Empirical evidence indicates that job stress and work–family conflict significantly increase psychological strain among hospitality employees, which in turn undermines performance outcomes (Abdou et al., 2024). In parallel, job satisfaction has been identified as a key attitudinal outcome shaped by organizational practices and work conditions, contributing to employee retention and performance-related outcomes in hospitality settings (Yadnya & Khamiliyah, 2024). Additional evidence also shows that job satisfaction can function as a mediating mechanism linking work environment conditions and organizational outcomes, reinforcing its role as a pathway through which work conditions translate into performance-related consequences (Tulim et al., 2025). These findings collectively suggest that employee satisfaction is not only an outcome of work conditions but also a mechanism through which job demands influence performance, particularly in service-intensive and high-contact work environments.

Despite this growing body of literature, several important gaps remain. First, much of the hospitality literature examines employee satisfaction and performance at a general organizational level, without sufficiently differentiating operational contexts such as front office work. This is a critical limitation because front office operations involve more intensive and immediate guest interaction compared to back-of-house functions, suggesting that the impact of job demands is more pronounced and context-specific. The lack of focus on front office as a distinct operational setting limits the explanatory power of existing models in capturing the realities of high-contact service work.

Second, prior studies often examine job demands, satisfaction, and performance as separate constructs or direct relationships, rather than as part of an integrated mechanism. Although JD-R theory explicitly suggests that job demands influence performance through mediating processes such as well-being or satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, 2023), empirical hospitality research has not consistently modeled employee satisfaction as a mediating variable linking job demands to service performance, particularly in front office contexts. As a result, the process through which operational pressures are translated into service outcomes remains insufficiently explained.

Third, in the Indonesian hospitality context, existing studies tend to rely on partial or single-variable analyses, such as examining job stress or service quality independently, without integrating these variables into a structural model (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021; Rihayana et al., 2021). This creates a limitation in understanding how operational work conditions, employee attitudes, and service outcomes interact simultaneously.

Consequently, there is a need for a model-based approach that captures both direct and indirect relationships among these variables within a specific operational context. Based on these gaps, this study proposes a structural model that examines the relationship between job demands and service performance, with employee satisfaction as a mediating variable, in hotel front office operations. Drawing on the JD-R perspective, this study argues that job demands not only directly influence service performance but also indirectly affect performance through their impact on employee satisfaction. By focusing on front office employees in star-rated hotels in Indonesia, this study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it contextualizes job demands within a high-contact service environment, where operational pressure and interpersonal interaction are tightly intertwined. Second, it clarifies the mediating mechanism through which job demands are translated into service performance, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of service outcomes in hospitality operations. Practically, the findings offer insights for hotel managers in designing work conditions that balance operational demands and employee well-being to sustain service quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Demands–Resources Theory

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how work characteristics influence employee well-being and performance. According to this model, job characteristics can be categorized into job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Job demands refer to aspects of work that require sustained physical, psychological, or emotional effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological or psychological costs. In contrast, job resources refer to aspects that help achieve work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth and motivation.

In service industries, including hospitality, job demands are often intensified due to the interactive nature of work. Employees must not only perform technical tasks but also manage interpersonal interactions and emotional expressions simultaneously. JD-R theory further suggests that job demands influence performance through both direct and indirect pathways, particularly through employee well-being and attitudinal responses (Bakker, 2023). This theoretical perspective provides the basis for examining how job demands in hotel front office operations may affect service performance through employee satisfaction.

Job Demands in Hotel Front Office Operations

Front office operations represent a high-contact service environment where employees engage directly and continuously with guests. These roles involve handling check-in and check-out processes, reservations, guest inquiries, complaint resolution, and coordination with other departments. Such responsibilities require employees to maintain accuracy, responsiveness, and emotional regulation under time pressure.

In this context, job demands typically manifest as workload, time pressure, role pressure, and emotional labor. Emotional labor, defined as the regulation of emotional expressions to meet organizational expectations, is particularly relevant in hospitality settings (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000). Front office employees are expected to display friendliness and professionalism even under stressful conditions, which increases psychological strain.

Empirical evidence supports the impact of job demands in hotel settings. Puspitawati and Atmaja (2021) found that job stress significantly affects job satisfaction and employee performance in four-star hotels. This suggests that operational pressure is not

only a work condition but also a determinant of service outcomes, particularly in high-contact service roles such as front office operations.

Employee Satisfaction in Hospitality Context

Employee satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees positively evaluate their work conditions, including workload, work environment, compensation, and managerial support. In hospitality industries, employee satisfaction plays a critical role because service quality is largely dependent on employees' attitudes and behaviors during guest interactions.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that employee satisfaction is closely related to service performance outcomes. Chi and Gursoy (2009) showed that employee satisfaction significantly influences customer satisfaction and financial performance. Similarly, Yee et al. (2008) found that employee satisfaction contributes to service quality and organizational profitability in high-contact service industries.

In the Indonesian hospitality context, Rihayana et al. (2021) demonstrated that job satisfaction significantly influences service quality in hotel operations. This finding reinforces the importance of internal employee conditions in shaping external service outcomes. Therefore, employee satisfaction is not merely an internal organizational variable but a key determinant of service performance.

Service Performance in Front Office Operations

Service performance in hotel front office operations refers to employees' ability to deliver services effectively, accurately, and responsively in accordance with organizational standards and guest expectations. This includes aspects such as speed of service, accuracy of information, professionalism, responsiveness, and effectiveness in handling complaints.

Unlike general employee performance, front office service performance is produced through real-time interaction between employees and guests. This makes it highly sensitive to work conditions, particularly job demands and employee psychological states. When employees experience excessive workload or dissatisfaction, their ability to maintain consistent service quality may decline.

Because front office employees serve as the primary interface between the hotel and its guests, their performance directly influences guest satisfaction and organizational reputation. Therefore, understanding the determinants of front office service performance is critical for both theoretical development and managerial practice.

Job Demands and Employee Satisfaction

JD-R theory suggests that excessive job demands can reduce employee well-being and satisfaction due to the strain they impose (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In front office operations, employees facing high workload, time pressure, and continuous guest interaction are likely to experience fatigue and stress, which may lower their job satisfaction.

Empirical findings support this relationship. Puspitawati and Atmaja (2021) found that job stress negatively affects job satisfaction in hotel settings. This suggests that as job demands increase, employees' positive evaluation of their work decreases.

H1: Job demands negatively affect employee satisfaction.

Job Demands and Service Performance

Job demands may also directly influence service performance. High levels of job demands can reduce employees' ability to maintain service accuracy, responsiveness, and emotional control. In front office operations, where service delivery is time-sensitive and interaction-intensive, excessive job demands may lead to reduced service quality. Although some studies suggest that moderate demands may enhance performance, excessive demands are generally associated with negative outcomes. In this study, job demands are conceptualized as operational pressures that are more likely to impair service performance when they exceed employees' coping capacity.

H2: Job demands significantly affect service performance.

Employee Satisfaction and Service Performance

Employee satisfaction is widely recognized as a key predictor of service performance in hospitality industries. Satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate positive service behavior, maintain emotional engagement, and respond effectively to guest needs.

Studies by Chi and Gursoy (2009) and Yee et al. (2008) provide strong empirical support for the relationship between employee satisfaction and service outcomes. In the Indonesian context, Rihayana et al. (2021) also found that job satisfaction positively influences service quality.

H3: Employee satisfaction positively affects service performance.

The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction

The mediating role of employee satisfaction is central to the JD-R framework. Job demands may reduce employee satisfaction, which in turn affects service performance. This suggests that employee satisfaction functions as a mechanism through which job demands influence performance.

Empirical support for this mediation model is found in both hospitality and non-hospitality contexts. Puspitawati and Atmaja (2021) demonstrated that job stress influences performance through satisfaction, while Mohyi et al. (2024) showed that employee well-being mediates the relationship between work stress and performance.

Based on this reasoning, employee satisfaction is expected to mediate the relationship between job demands and service performance.

H4: Employee satisfaction mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance.

Hypotheses Development

Job Demands and Employee Satisfaction

In hotel front office operations, employees are exposed to continuous guest interaction, time pressure, and high workload intensity. These conditions require sustained cognitive and emotional effort, which may lead to fatigue and psychological strain. When job demands exceed employees' capacity to cope, their overall evaluation of the job is likely to decline.

Empirical evidence indicates that work-related stress reduces employee satisfaction in hotel settings (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021). This suggests that higher levels of job demands are associated with lower employee satisfaction.

H1: Job demands negatively affect employee satisfaction.

Job Demands and Service Performance

Service performance in front office operations depends on employees' ability to maintain accuracy, responsiveness, and professionalism during real-time interactions with guests. However, excessive job demands may reduce employees' capacity to perform consistently, particularly when workload and time pressure limit their ability to manage service encounters effectively.

Prior research has shown that job stress can influence employee performance in hospitality settings (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021). Therefore, job demands are expected to affect service performance.

H2: Job demands significantly affect service performance.

Employee Satisfaction and Service Performance

Employee satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping service behavior in hospitality contexts. Satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes, maintain emotional engagement, and provide responsive and attentive service to guests.

Previous studies have consistently found a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and service outcomes, including service quality and customer satisfaction (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Yee et al., 2008). In hotel operations, employee satisfaction has also been shown to improve service quality (Rihayana et al., 2021).

H3: Employee satisfaction positively affects service performance.

The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction

The relationship between job demands and service performance may not occur solely through direct effects. Instead, job demands can influence employees' psychological conditions, which in turn affect their performance. When job demands reduce employee satisfaction, the quality of service delivery may decline.

Empirical studies support this mediating mechanism. Job stress has been shown to affect performance through employee satisfaction in hotel contexts (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021), while broader research demonstrates that well-being mediates the relationship between work stress and performance (Mohyi et al., 2024).

H4: Employee satisfaction mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a structural framework to explain how job demands influence service performance in hotel front office operations, both directly and indirectly through employee satisfaction. The framework is grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) perspective, which emphasizes that work demands not only produce immediate performance effects but also shape employees' attitudinal responses that subsequently affect work outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, 2023).

In front office operations, job demands arise from workload intensity, time pressure, and continuous interaction with guests. These demands require sustained cognitive and emotional effort, making front office employees particularly vulnerable to operational strain. When job demands exceed employees' capacity to cope, they may reduce

employees' satisfaction with their work, which in turn affects how they perform during service encounters.

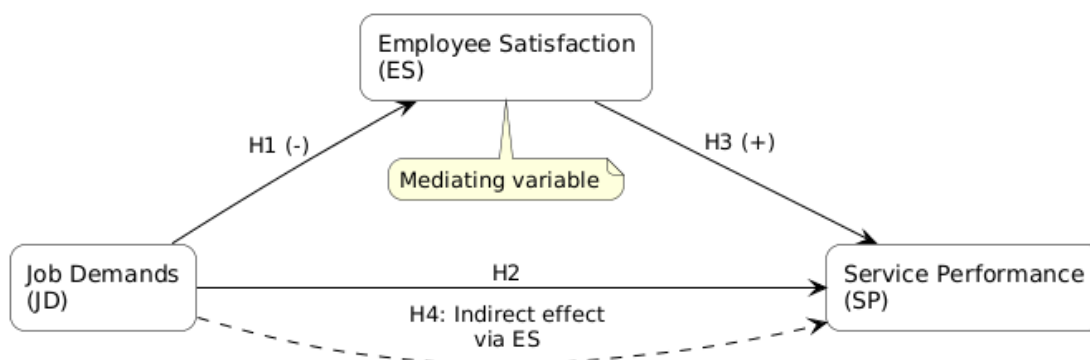
Employee satisfaction is therefore positioned as a key intervening mechanism in this framework. Rather than being treated solely as an outcome, employee satisfaction explains how job demands are translated into service performance. Lower levels of satisfaction may weaken employees' responsiveness, professionalism, and consistency in service delivery, while higher satisfaction supports positive service behavior in high-contact service environments.

At the same time, job demands are expected to have a direct effect on service performance. In front office settings, where service delivery occurs in real time, operational pressure can immediately influence employees' ability to manage guest interactions. This direct path acknowledges that not all effects of job demand operate through employee attitudes; some effects occur directly due to time constraints and service intensity.

Based on this reasoning, the conceptual framework integrates both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. Job demands influence employee satisfaction (H1), directly affect service performance (H2), and indirectly affect service performance through employee satisfaction (H4). In addition, employee satisfaction positively influences service performance (H3). This dual-path structure provides a comprehensive explanation of how operational conditions shape service outcomes in hotel front office operations.

The proposed conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Job Demands, Employee Satisfaction, and Service Performance



From a methodological perspective, the model is specified as a reflective measurement model and estimated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This approach is appropriate given the predictive orientation of the study, the use of latent constructs, and the inclusion of a mediation mechanism. The structural model simultaneously tests the direct effects among constructs and the indirect effect of job demands on service performance through employee satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among job demands, employee satisfaction, and service performance in hotel front office operations. A survey-based approach is appropriate for examining perceptual constructs and testing structural relationships among latent variables (Hair et al., 2021).

The unit of analysis in this study is individual front office employees. The population consisted of front office staff working in star-rated hotels in Indonesia, particularly in major urban tourism areas. Front office employees were selected because they are directly involved in guest-facing service delivery, making them relevant respondents for assessing service performance in high-contact service environments.

A purposive sampling technique was applied using the following criteria: (1) employees working in the front office department, (2) direct involvement in guest service activities, and (3) a minimum of six months of work experience. These criteria ensure that respondents have sufficient exposure to operational demands and service processes. Data were collected between January and March 2026 through a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline.

A total of 200 valid responses were obtained and used for analysis. This sample size is considered adequate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), particularly for models with mediation relationships and moderate complexity (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Compared to covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM is more appropriate for this study due to its predictive orientation, ability to handle latent constructs with multiple indicators, and suitability for relatively moderate sample sizes.

All constructs were measured as reflective latent variables using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Job demands were measured using four indicators capturing workload, time pressure, continuous interaction with guests, and emotional demands, consistent with the Job Demands–Resources framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Employee satisfaction was measured using four items reflecting overall job satisfaction and work conditions, adapted from established job satisfaction research (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Service performance was measured using four indicators related to responsiveness, accuracy, professionalism, and effectiveness in handling guest requests, reflecting service behavior in hospitality settings (Yee et al., 2008).

The questionnaire items were adapted from prior studies and contextualized to hotel front office operations. Content validity was ensured through expert review, and a pilot test was conducted to improve clarity and reliability of the instrument (Hair et al., 2021). To reduce potential common method bias, several procedural remedies were applied, including ensuring respondent anonymity, separating measurement items by construct, and using clear and concise wording (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, statistical assessment was conducted using Harman's single-factor test and full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) to confirm that common method variance did not significantly bias the results.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The analysis followed a two-step approach: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model was assessed using indicator reliability (outer loadings > 0.70), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70), convergent validity (AVE > 0.50), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT < 0.85–0.90) (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2015).

The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values obtained through bootstrapping, along with coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) (Hair et al., 2021). Mediation analysis was conducted by examining the indirect effect of job demands on service performance through

employee satisfaction using bootstrapping procedures. The type of mediation was determined based on the significance of both direct and indirect effects.

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

A total of 200 valid responses were analyzed. All respondents were front office employees working in star-rated hotels in Indonesia and directly involved in guest service activities.

The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1. The majority of respondents were female (58%), while male respondents accounted for 42%. Most respondents were aged between 21–30 years (64%), indicating a relatively young workforce in front office operations. In terms of work experience, the majority had 1–3 years of experience (48%), followed by more than 3 years (32%), suggesting that respondents had sufficient experience to evaluate job demands and service performance.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	84	42%
	Female	116	58%
Age	≤ 20 years	12	6%
	21–30 years	128	64%
	31–40 years	52	26%
	> 40 years	8	4%
Work Experience	< 1 year	40	20%
	1–3 years	96	48%
	> 3 years	64	32%

Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive statistics were examined to understand the general tendency of the constructs. As shown in Table 2, job demands were perceived at a moderate-to-high level (Mean = 3.74), indicating that front office work involves considerable operational pressure. Employee satisfaction (Mean = 3.61) and service performance (Mean = 3.88) were relatively high, suggesting that employees maintained positive work attitudes and service behavior despite demanding work conditions, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Demands	3.74	0.68
Employee Satisfaction	3.61	0.71
Service Performance	3.88	0.63

Common method bias was assessed using both procedural and statistical approaches. Harman's single-factor test indicated that the first factor explained 36.41% of the variance, below the 50% threshold. In addition, full collinearity VIF values ranged from 1.18 to 1.92, suggesting that common method bias was not a major concern.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

As shown in Table 3, all outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.742 to 0.865, indicating adequate indicator reliability.

Table 3. Outer Loadings

Construct	Indicator	Loading
Job Demands	JD1	0.742
	JD2	0.786
	JD3	0.812
	JD4	0.769
Employee Satisfaction	ES1	0.801
	ES2	0.842
	ES3	0.865
	ES4	0.823
Service Performance	SP1	0.777
	SP2	0.831
	SP3	0.858
	SP4	0.804

As shown in Table 4, all constructs achieved acceptable reliability and convergent validity. Composite reliability values were above 0.70, and AVE values exceeded 0.50.

Table 4. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Demands	0.783	0.860	0.605
Employee Satisfaction	0.853	0.901	0.694
Service Performance	0.835	0.890	0.670

Discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT criterion. All values were below 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Construct Pair	HTMT
Job Demands – Employee Satisfaction	0.579
Job Demands – Service Performance	0.552
Employee Satisfaction – Service Performance	0.741

Structural Model Evaluation

Before testing the structural relationships, collinearity diagnostics were conducted to ensure that predictor constructs did not exhibit multicollinearity issues. As presented in Table 6, all variance inflation factor (VIF) values range between 1.000 and 1.299, which are well below the commonly accepted threshold of 3.3. This indicates that collinearity is not a concern in the structural model.

Table 6. Collinearity Assessment (VIF)

Endogenous Construct	Predictor	VIF
Employee Satisfaction	Job Demands	1.000
Service Performance	Job Demands	1.299
Service Performance	Employee Satisfaction	1.299

The explanatory power of the model was then evaluated using R^2 values, while predictive relevance was assessed using Q^2 . As shown in Table 7, the model explains 23.0% of the variance in employee satisfaction and 46.7% in service performance, indicating moderate explanatory power. In addition, Q^2 values for both constructs are above zero, confirming that the model has adequate predictive relevance.

Table 7. Collinearity Assessment (VIF)

Construct	R^2	Q^2
Employee Satisfaction	0.230	0.132
Service Performance	0.467	0.287

Model fit was further examined using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). As reported in Table 8, the SRMR value of 0.061 falls below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating an acceptable level of model fit.

Table 8. Model Fit

Indicator	Value	Interpretation
SRMR	0.061	Acceptable

Following the assessment of model adequacy, the structural relationships were tested using bootstrapping procedures. The results, summarized in Table 9, show that job demands have a significant negative effect on employee satisfaction ($\beta = -0.480$, $p < 0.001$) and service performance ($\beta = -0.236$, $p = 0.002$). In contrast, employee satisfaction has a significant positive effect on service performance ($\beta = 0.538$, $p < 0.001$), indicating its central mediating role within the model.

Table 9. Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Result
H1	JD \rightarrow ES	-0.480	7.416	<0.001	[-0.601, -0.356]	Supported
H2	JD \rightarrow SP	-0.236	3.114	0.002	[-0.381, -0.087]	Supported
H3	ES \rightarrow SP	0.538	8.607	<0.001	[0.416, 0.650]	Supported

To further assess the magnitude of these relationships, effect sizes (f^2) were calculated. As shown in Table 10, the effect of job demands on employee satisfaction is categorized as medium ($f^2 = 0.299$), while its effect on service performance is relatively small ($f^2 = 0.069$). Meanwhile, employee satisfaction demonstrates a medium-to-large effect on service performance ($f^2 = 0.359$), reinforcing its substantive role in explaining performance outcomes.

Table 10. Effect Size (f²)

Path	f ²	Interpretation
JD → ES	0.299	Medium
JD → SP	0.069	Small
ES → SP	0.359	Medium to Large

Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis indicates that employee satisfaction plays a significant role in explaining the relationship between job demands and service performance. As presented in Table 11, the indirect effect of job demands on service performance through employee satisfaction was negative and statistically significant ($\beta = -0.258$, $p < 0.001$), and the 95% confidence interval did not include zero, confirming the robustness of the mediation effect.

Because the direct effect of job demands on service performance remained significant after the inclusion of employee satisfaction, the mediation is classified as partial mediation. This finding suggests that job demands influence service performance both directly and indirectly through employee satisfaction, indicating that employee satisfaction functions as an important explanatory mechanism rather than a full transmission pathway.

Table 11. Mediation Analysis

Path	Indirect Effect (β)	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Mediation Type
JD → ES → SP	-0.258	5.982	<0.001	[-0.354, -0.174]	Partial

To further evaluate the predictive capability of the model, PLSpredict analysis was conducted. As shown in Table 12, the PLS-SEM model generally outperformed the linear model benchmark for most service performance indicators, suggesting acceptable predictive performance. Although one indicator (SP4) showed slightly better performance under the linear model, the overall pattern supports the model's predictive relevance.

Table 12. PLSpredict Results

Indicator	PLS-SEM RMSE	Linear Model RMSE	Interpretation
SP1	0.612	0.641	PLS-SEM better
SP2	0.598	0.625	PLS-SEM better
SP3	0.604	0.618	PLS-SEM better
SP4	0.631	0.623	Linear model slightly better

Overall, the results provide consistent support for all proposed hypotheses. As summarized in Table 13, job demands were found to negatively affect both employee satisfaction and service performance, while employee satisfaction positively influenced service performance. In addition, employee satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between job demands and service performance.

Table 13. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Job demands negatively affect employee satisfaction	Supported
H2	Job demands negatively affect service performance	Supported
H3	Employee satisfaction positively affects service performance	Supported
H4	Employee satisfaction mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance	Supported (Partial Mediation)

DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between job demands, employee satisfaction, and service performance in hotel front office operations. The findings support all proposed hypotheses and show that job demands are not merely background working conditions, but central factors shaping both employee attitudes and service outcomes. More importantly, the results demonstrate that employee satisfaction serves as a key mechanism through which operational pressure is translated into service performance. These findings are important because front office work is a high-contact service setting where employees must simultaneously manage technical tasks, emotional display, and guest expectations.

The first finding shows that job demands negatively affect employee satisfaction, supporting H1. This means that higher workload, time pressure, continuous guest interaction, and emotional demands reduce employees' positive evaluation of their work. This result is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which explains that excessive job demands require sustained effort and may produce psychological costs when not balanced by adequate resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In the context of hotel front office operations, this finding is particularly meaningful because job demands are embedded in daily service routines. Front office employees are expected to respond quickly, handle complaints professionally, provide accurate information, and maintain a pleasant attitude even during peak occupancy or difficult guest interactions. These repeated demands can make employees perceive their work as stressful, emotionally draining, and less satisfying.

This finding also supports previous research showing that job stress affects job satisfaction in hotel settings (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021). However, the present study extends this argument by situating job demands specifically within front office operations. Unlike general hotel employees, front office staff work at the visible boundary between the hotel and its guests. Their work pressure is not only administrative but also relational, because they must manage guest expectations in real time. Therefore, the negative effect of job demands on satisfaction should not be interpreted simply as a workload issue. It reflects a broader operational problem in which the intensity of guest-facing work can reduce employees' emotional comfort and overall satisfaction with their job.

The second finding shows that job demands negatively affect service performance, supporting H2. This result indicates that operational pressure directly weakens employees' ability to deliver consistent, accurate, and responsive service. In front office operations, service performance depends on speed, accuracy, professionalism, and emotional control. When job demands are excessive, employees may still complete their tasks, but the quality of service interaction may decline. For example, high workload and

time pressure can reduce attentiveness, increase the risk of inaccurate information, delay responses to guest requests, or weaken complaint-handling quality.

This finding is important because it demonstrates that job demands affect not only employee attitudes but also observable service outcomes. From the JD-R perspective, excessive demands can drain employees' cognitive and emotional resources, thereby limiting their ability to perform effectively (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, 2023). This is highly relevant to front office work, where service failures can occur immediately and visibly. A delayed response, unfriendly tone, or inaccurate explanation at the front desk can directly influence guest perceptions of the hotel. Therefore, service performance in front office operations should not be treated as an individual employee responsibility alone. It is also shaped by how hotels structure workload, staffing, shift allocation, and service procedures.

The result also aligns with Puspitawati and Atmaja (2021), who found that job stress affects employee performance in four-star hotels. However, the present study adds a more specific interpretation by showing that in front office operations, job demands have a direct negative path to service performance even after employee satisfaction is considered. This suggests that some effects of job demand occur immediately through operational constraints. In other words, even when employees remain relatively satisfied, excessive workload or time pressure can still reduce service performance because service delivery is constrained by real-time operational conditions.

The third finding shows that employee satisfaction positively affects service performance, supporting H3. This finding confirms that satisfied employees are more likely to perform better in guest-facing service roles. In hospitality, service performance is not limited to completing assigned tasks; it also involves emotional engagement, responsiveness, courtesy, and willingness to assist guests. Employees who are satisfied with their work are more likely to show positive service behavior, maintain professionalism, and respond effectively to guest needs

This result supports previous studies showing that employee satisfaction contributes to service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance in service industries (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Yee et al., 2008). It also aligns with Rihayana et al. (2021), who found that job satisfaction supports service quality in hotel operations. The contribution of the present study lies in confirming this relationship in the specific context of front office operations. This context matters because front office employees often shape the first and last impression of the hotel. Their satisfaction may influence not only task performance but also the tone, warmth, and attentiveness of service encounters. Therefore, employee satisfaction should be understood as a strategic service resource rather than merely an internal human resource outcome.

The strength of the employee satisfaction effect also suggests that improving service performance cannot rely solely on standard operating procedures or technical training. Although procedures are important, service performance in front office operations depends heavily on employees' willingness and emotional readiness to enact those standards consistently. When employees feel satisfied, they are more likely to internalize service goals and translate them into guest-oriented behavior. This explains why employee satisfaction emerged as a stronger direct predictor of service performance than job demands in the model.

The fourth finding shows that employee satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance, supporting H4. The mediation is partial, meaning that job demands influence service performance both

directly and indirectly through employee satisfaction. This is one of the most important findings of the study because it clarifies the mechanism through which operational pressure affects service outcomes.

The partial mediation result suggests that employee satisfaction explains part of the effect of job demands on service performance, but not all of it. This means that job demands operate through two pathways. First, they reduce employee satisfaction, which then weakens service performance. Second, they directly affect service performance through immediate operational constraints such as time pressure, workload intensity, and continuous guest interaction. This dual pathway is consistent with JD-R theory, which explains that job demands can influence performance through strain-related processes as well as direct work-related limitations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, 2023).

This finding also supports earlier studies showing that satisfaction or well-being can mediate the relationship between work stress and performance (Puspitawati & Atmaja, 2021; Mohyi et al., 2024). However, the present study contributes by showing that this mediating mechanism is relevant in hotel front office operations, where service performance is produced through real-time interaction. In this context, employee satisfaction is not simply a psychological condition; it is a transmission mechanism that connects operational work pressure to service behavior. When job demands reduce satisfaction, employees may become less engaged, less patient, and less responsive in guest service encounters.

The partial mediation finding is especially important for managerial interpretation. If the mediation had been full, it would suggest that job demands affect service performance only through satisfaction. However, because the mediation is partial, hotels need to address both sides of the problem. Improving employee satisfaction is necessary, but it is not sufficient if operational pressures remain excessive. Hotels must also manage workload, staffing levels, shift patterns, and service processes directly. This finding therefore prevents an overly narrow managerial conclusion that “making employees satisfied” alone will solve performance problems. Service performance requires both employee satisfaction and operational design.

Taken together, the findings strengthen the application of JD-R theory in hospitality management by demonstrating that job demands, employee satisfaction, and service performance are structurally connected in front office operations. The study shows that front office service performance is shaped by both operational and psychological mechanisms. This is important because much hospitality research treats service performance either as a behavioral outcome of employee attitude or as a result of operational efficiency. The present study integrates both perspectives by showing that job demands directly affect performance while also shaping it indirectly through satisfaction.

The findings also clarify the specific nature of front office work as a high-contact service environment. Front office employees are not only service providers but also emotional regulators, information brokers, complaint handlers, and coordinators of hotel operations. Because of this, their performance depends on whether operational demands remain manageable and whether employees maintain positive attitudes toward their work. This provides a more nuanced explanation of service performance than models that focus only on satisfaction or only on workload.

Theoretically, this study contributes to hospitality management literature in three ways. First, it contextualizes JD-R theory within hotel front office operations, a setting where work demands are simultaneously operational, emotional, and relational. Second, it demonstrates that employee satisfaction functions as a mediating mechanism linking job demands to service performance. Third, it shows that job demands have both direct and indirect effects, suggesting that service performance is shaped by a combination of immediate operational pressure and employee attitudinal response.

Practically, the findings suggest that hotel managers should not view front office performance problems as merely individual employee weaknesses. Declining service performance may reflect excessive operational pressure, insufficient staffing, poor shift design, unclear task distribution, or limited support during peak service periods. Managers should therefore monitor workload intensity, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, improve scheduling fairness, and provide adequate support during high-demand periods. At the same time, hotels should strengthen employee satisfaction through recognition, supportive supervision, fair workload distribution, and opportunities for professional development.

In addition, front office managers should treat employee satisfaction as part of service quality management. Because satisfaction significantly affects service performance, improving the employee experience can help sustain service consistency. Training programs should not only focus on technical service procedures but also on emotional regulation, complaint handling, and coping strategies for high-pressure service encounters. This is especially important in hotel front office operations, where service quality is often judged through short but intense interactions between employees and guests.

Overall, the discussion of the findings indicates that service performance in hotel front office operations cannot be understood solely from the perspective of individual competence. It is produced through the interaction between operational demands, employee satisfaction, and real-time guest service behavior. By showing that employee satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between job demands and service performance, this study provides a more complete explanation of how hotels can sustain service quality under demanding operational conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among job demands, employee satisfaction, and service performance in hotel front office operations. The findings show that job demands negatively affect employee satisfaction and service performance, while employee satisfaction positively influences service performance. In addition, employee satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between job demands and service performance. These results indicate that operational pressure in front office work not only directly influences service outcomes but also indirectly shapes performance through its effect on employee satisfaction.

The findings suggest that service performance in front office operations is influenced by both operational and attitudinal factors. Job demands represent structural work conditions that can constrain employees' ability to deliver service, while employee satisfaction reflects the internal response that supports or weakens service behavior. The presence of partial mediation indicates that improving employee satisfaction alone may not fully offset the negative effects of high job demands, as some effects occur directly through operational constraints.

From a practical perspective, the results imply that hotel management should address both workload conditions and employee experience. Managing job demands through appropriate staffing, workload distribution, and scheduling is necessary to prevent performance decline. At the same time, maintaining employee satisfaction is important to sustain service quality in guest-facing roles.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables. Second, the study focuses only on front office employees, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other departments within the hotel industry. Third, the model includes a limited number of variables, and does not account for other factors that may influence service performance, such as leadership, organizational support, or emotional labor strategies.

Future research could extend this study by using longitudinal designs to better capture causal dynamics over time. In addition, future studies may include additional variables, such as leadership style, perceived organizational support, or emotional labor regulation, to provide a more comprehensive explanation of service performance. Comparative studies across different hotel departments or service industries may also help to clarify whether the observed relationships are specific to front office operations or apply more broadly across service contexts.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently without any financial or commercial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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