Original Article

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The Influence of Workload and Service Innovation on Employee Performance with Work Engagement as an Intervening Variable at the Community Health Center (UPT Puskesmas) of Kuala Subdistrict, Langkat Regency

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Abstract:

The Puskesmas not only provides access to healthcare but is also expected to innovate according to local needs, especially in remote areas. However, limitations in human resources, facilities, and budgets often hinder the effectiveness of services. Therefore, the Puskesmas requires competent workforce to improve performance and service quality, with human resources being a key factor in the organization's success. This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of workload and service innovation on employee performance with work engagement as an intervening variable at the UPT Puskesmas Kecamatan Kuala, Langkat Regency. The research uses a quantitative approach. The population for this study consists of 129 employees of UPT Puskesmas Kecamatan Kuala, Langkat Regency, with the sampling technique used being saturated sampling, which is part of non-probability sampling, involving all 129 employees as the sample. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistical analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM). The results of this study show that Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y), Service Innovation (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y), Work Engagement (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y), Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Work Engagement (Z), Service Innovation (X2) has no effect on Work Engagement (Z), Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z), and Service Innovation (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z) at UPT Puskesmas Kecamatan Kuala, Langkat Regency.

Keywords: Workload, Service Innovation, Employee Performance, and Work Engagement.

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Introduction

Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) play a crucial role as the frontline of public health services in Indonesia. They are not only responsible for providing equitable access to healthcare but also act as the driving force for service innovation tailored to local conditions, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas. However, these centers face significant challenges, particularly related to limited human resources, inadequate facilities, and constrained operational budgets. These factors directly affect the quality and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. In this context, the presence of competent human resources and optimal employee performance are essential to maintain and improve service quality.

According to Hasibuan (2022), human resource management is both a science and an art of managing work relationships to achieve organizational, employee, and societal goals effectively and efficiently. This underscores the notion that successful healthcare delivery is heavily influenced by employee performance. The overall performance of an organization greatly depends on the performance of the individuals within it. When individual performance is high, it positively impacts the achievement of organizational goals (Sabirin & Ilham, 2020). Therefore, evaluating employee performance becomes essential as a measure of task effectiveness, in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, and work attitude (Rosalina & Wati, 2020; Sugiyono & Rahajeng, 2022).

Data from the UPT Puskesmas Kuala in Langkat Regency reveals that the average performance achievement in the implementation of Essential Public Health Efforts (UKM) in the first semester of 2022 was only 56.92%, categorized as “Low.” Out of six assessed UKM components, five were rated “Low,” including health promotion (47.6%), environmental health (46.6%), maternal and child health (42.67%), and dental services (74.9%). Only one componentdisease prevention and control (P2) was rated as “Moderate” (86.4%).

A similar trend was observed in the implementation of Developmental Public Health Efforts, where the average performance reached only 63.3%, also categorized as “Low.” Several components, such as community dental health, school health, and elderly health services, showed unsatisfactory results. According to assessments by the Langkat District Health Office, the overall performance of the Puskesmas remains suboptimal, with an average achievement of approximately 60%.

This issue is exacerbated by limited human resources at UPT Puskesmas Kuala. Data shows that several critical roles such as sanitarians, nutritionists, and ambulance drivers are completely unavailable, while others such as dentists, analysts, and administrative personnel are in very limited numbers. The total workforce of 129 employees is insufficient to meet the service demands, considering the high workload carried by the staff.

A preliminary survey of 30 employees indicated that many staff members have not demonstrated optimal performance. Approximately 57% of respondents felt that their work had not contributed significantly to the center’s goals, and only 33% stated that they consistently maintained service quality. These findings suggest weak organizational contribution and declining service quality.

One suspected factor affecting poor performance is workload. Based on the same survey, 67% of employees reported fatigue due to excessive tasks, 60% felt their duties exceeded their capabilities, and 57% acknowledged that workload negatively impacted service quality. Excessive workload, both physically and mentally, may lead to job stress, reduced productivity, and decreased work motivation (Indrayana & Putra, 2024; Winoto

& Perkasa, 2024; Sundari & Meria, 2022).

In addition to workload, service innovation is also seen as a vital factor in enhancing employee performance. Service innovation refers to the application of new ideas or methods to improve service effectiveness for the community. However, the preliminary survey shows that only 40% of employees agreed that innovation was being applied in the Puskesmas, and just 33% felt involved in the innovation process. This reflects a lack of an innovative culture that could otherwise promote work efficiency and motivation (Imam & Gunistiyo, 2024; Robbins & Judge, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned issues, it can be concluded that employee performance at UPT Puskesmas Kuala, Langkat Regency, still needs significant improvement. Workload and service innovation are suspected to have a close relationship with employee performance. Therefore, this research is essential to analyze the influence of workload and service innovation on employee performance, in order to provide strategic recommendations for improving the quality of public health services in the region.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design with an associative approach to investigate the relationships between workload, service innovation, work engagement, and employee performance at UPT Puskesmas Kuala, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. The quantitative method is grounded in positivist philosophy and seeks to examine objective data through statistical analysis. The associative approach was selected to explore the correlation and potential causal effects among the observed variables.

The research was conducted between July 2024 and April 2025 at UPT Puskesmas Kuala, involving health professionals who are directly engaged in service delivery. The target population consisted of 129 employees, while the sample was determined using purposive sampling techniques. This sampling method was chosen to ensure the inclusion of participants who possess relevant experience and knowledge related to the research variables. Specifically, the study focused on midwives and nurses, resulting in a final sample size of 102 respondents.

The data utilized in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires, which were designed based on validated measurement constructs and utilized a Likert scale to quantify respondents' perceptions. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), capturing the intensity of attitudes toward workload, service innovation, work engagement, and performance. Secondary data were sourced from institutional records, relevant scientific literature, and supporting documentation to enhance the depth and context of the analysis.

The research model consisted of two exogenous (independent) variables workload and service innovation one endogenous (dependent) variable, namely employee performance, and one intervening variable, work engagement. All variables were operationally defined in accordance with existing theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies to ensure construct validity.

For data analysis, the study applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. SEM-PLS is particularly appropriate for predictive research involving complex models and is robust with relatively small to medium sample sizes. The analytical procedure comprised two key stages: the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

The measurement model assessment involved evaluating convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. Convergent validity was tested through indicator loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. Reliability was established through Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability, with threshold values set at ≥0.70.

The structural model analysis aimed to examine the hypothesized relationships among latent constructs. Path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values were calculated using bootstrapping techniques to assess the significance of each direct and indirect relationship. In addition, R-squared values were evaluated to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

This methodological framework enabled a comprehensive analysis of how workload and service innovation impact employee performance, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of work engagement. The findings derived from this approach are expected to inform both theoretical understanding and practical improvements in human resource management within the healthcare sector.

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of respondents based on gender are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	38	37.3	37.3	37.3
	Female	64	62.7	62.7	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

The analysis results in Table 4.1 show that the majority of respondents are female, accounting for 67.7%, compared to male respondents. This indicates that the UPT Puskesmas of Kuala Subdistrict, Langkat Regency, generally employs more female than male staff. This condition reflects gender diversity in the healthcare workforce, which is often dominated by women, especially in roles directly related to community service.
The characteristics of respondents based on age are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics by Age

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 - 30 Year	53	52.0	52.0	52.0
	31 - 40 Year	24	23.5	23.5	75.5
	41 - 50 Year	16	15.7	15.7	91.2
	>50 Tahun	9	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

According to the analysis results in Table 4.2, most respondents fall within the age ranges of 20–30 years and 31–40 years, comprising 52.0% of the total. This indicates that the majority of employees at UPT Puskesmas Kuala Subdistrict, Langkat Regency, are in their productive years (20–40 years old). This reflects a relatively young and energetic workforce, which may bring enthusiasm and innovation in performing daily tasks. However, it also highlights the importance of career development and continuous

skill enhancement to support long-term performance and service quality at the Puskesmas.

The characteristics of respondents based on educational background are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics by Educational Background

Educational Background					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	S1	59	57.8	57.8	57.8
	S2	43	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

The analysis results in Table 4.3 reveal that most respondents at UPT Puskesmas Kuala Subdistrict, Langkat Regency, hold a bachelor's degree (S1). This suggests a preference by the institution to recruit employees with higher education levels. The presence of staff with bachelor's degrees can contribute to improved quality of healthcare services, as they possess more comprehensive knowledge and skills in their respective fields. This also reflects the Puskesmas' effort to ensure optimal performance through a well-educated and competent workforce.

SEM-PLS Analysis

a. Test Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model test (outer model) also known as (outer relation or measurement model) can describe how each indicator block relates to its latent variables (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The outer model test in this study was carried out with convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability. The results of the measurement model test (outer model) can be described as follows:

1. TestConvergent Validity

Convergent validity test is carried out for reflective indicators which can be done by using the correlation between the indicator score and the construct score (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The convergent validity test in this study is seen through the loading factor. The loading factor value can be said to meet convergent validity if it has a loading value of more than 0.70. The results of the convergent validity test can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. First Outer Loading Factor

	Employee Performance (Y)	Workload (X1)	InnovationService (X2)	*Work Engagement*(Z)
KK_1	0.735			
KK_2	0.705			
KK_3	0.781			
KK_4	0.721			
KK_5	0.816			
KK_6	0.759			
KK_7	0.753			
KK_8	0.845			
KK_9	0.721			
KK_10	0.716			
BK_1		0.813		
BK_2		0.83		

BK_3		0.846		
BK_4		0.854		
BK_5		0.839		
BK_6		0.773		
BK_7		0.867		
BK_8		0.843		
BK_9		0.869		
BK_10		0.896		
IN_1			0.85	
IN_2			0.621	
IN_3			0.684	
IN_4			0.651	
IN_5			0.748	
IN_6			0.831	
IN_7			0.735	
IN_8			0.726	
IN_9			0.785	
IN_10			0.88	
IN_11			0.745	
IN_12			0.758	
WE_1				0.831
WE_2				0.865
WE_3				0.878
WE_4				0.825
WE_5				0.863
WE_6				0.806
WE_7				0.86
WE_8				0.706
WE_9				0.726
WE_10				0.754

The results of the first outer loading factor in the table above show that there are invalid construct indicators, namely the Service Innovation variable (X2), namely in statement items 2, 3 and 4.

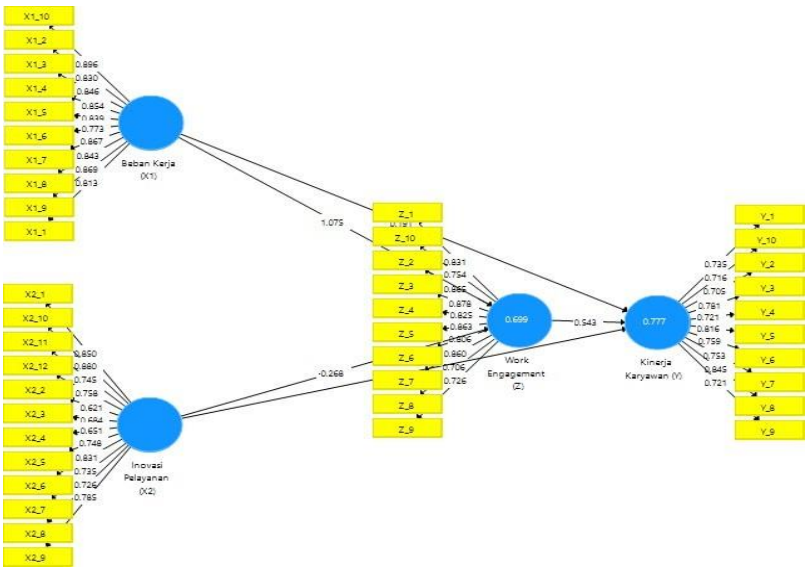

Figure 1. First Outer Loading Factor

The results of the convergent validity analysis through the outer loading factor value above indicate that there are question items that cannot meet the loading factor value, namely the Service Innovation variable (X2). So that the question item will be discarded and convergent validity testing will be carried out again. The results of the construct indicator test in the next test after being discarded are as follows:

Table 5. Second Outer Loading Factor

	Employee Performance (Y)	Workload (X_1)	Innovation Service (X2)	*Work Engagement*(Z)
KK_1	0.735			
KK_2	0.705			
KK_3	0.781			
KK_4	0.721			
KK_5	0.816			
KK_6	0.758			
KK_7	0.753			
KK_8	0.845			
KK_9	0.722			
KK_10	0.717			
BK_1		0.813		
BK_2		0.83		
BK_3		0.846		
BK_4		0.854		
BK_5		0.839		
BK_6		0.773		
BK_7		0.867		
BK_8		0.843		
BK_9		0.869		
BK_10		0.896		
IN_1			0.863	
IN_5			0.736	
IN_6			0.828	
IN_7			0.744	
IN_8			0.719	
IN_9			0.78	
IN_10			0.894	
IN_11			0.766	
IN_12			0.778	
WE_1				0.831
WE_2				0.865
WE_3				0.878
WE_4				0.825
WE_5				0.863
WE_6				0.806
WE_7				0.86
WE_8				0.706
WE_9				0.726
WE_10				0.754

2. Test Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test of the measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed based on the crossloading of measurements with constructs. The discriminant validity test in this study is seen based on the average variance extracted (AVE) value with a criterion of > 0.50 (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The results of the discriminant validity test can be seen in the table below:

Table 6. Results of Discriminant Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average VarianceExtracted (AVE)
Workload (X1)	0.955	0.956	0.961	0.712
InnovationService (X2)	0.926	0.94	0.938	0.627
Performance Employee (Y)	0.917	0.919	0.93	0.572
Work Engagement(Z)	0.942	0.944	0.951	0.662

The results of the discriminant validity test in the table above are seen based on the average value extracted (AVE) and can be explained as follows:

1. The Workload variable (X1) obtained an average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.712, which is greater than 0.50 (0.712 > 0.50). So it can be concluded that the Workload variable (X1) meets the average variance extracted (AVE) value.
2. The Service Innovation variable (X2) obtained an average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.627, which is greater than 0.50 (0.627 > 0.50). So it can be concluded that the Service Innovation variable (X2) meets the average variance extracted (AVE) value.
3. Employee Performance variable (Y) obtained the average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.572, which is greater than 0.50 (0.572 > 0.50). So it can be concluded that the Employee Performance variable (Y) meets the average variance extracted (AVE) value.
4. The Work Engagement (Z) variable obtains the average variance extracted value (AVE) which is 0.662 is greater than 0.50 (0.662 > 0.50). So it can be concluded that the Work Engagement (Z) variable meets the average variance extracted (AVE) value.

3. Test Composite Reliability

The composite reliability test aims to determine the reliability of a construct. The composite reliability test in this study uses composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha with a value greater than 0.70 can be stated to meet composite reliability (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The results of the composite reliability test are presented in the following table:

Table 7. Composite Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	*Composite Reliability*	*Average VarianceExtracted (AVE)*
Workload (X1)	0.955	0.956	0.961	0.712
InnovationService (X2)	0.926	0.94	0.938	0.627
PerformanceEmployee (Y)	0.917	0.919	0.93	0.572
WorkEngagement(Z)	0.942	0.944	0.951	0.662

The results of the composite reliability test in the table above are seen based on the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values and can be explained as follows:

1. The Workload variable (X1) obtained a composite reliability value of 0.961, which is greater than 0.70 (0.961 > 0.70) and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.955 is greater than 0.70 (0.955 > 0.70), so it can be concluded that on the Workload variable (X1) it is stated as reliable.
2. The Service Innovation variable (X2) obtained a composite reliability value of 0.938 is greater than 0.70 (0.938 > 0.70) and Cronbach's alpha of 0.926 is greater than 0.70 (0.926 > 0.70), it can be concluded that the Service Innovation variable (X2) is stated to be reliable.
3. Employee Performance Variable (Y) obtained a composite reliability value of 0.930 is greater than 0.70 (0.930 > 0.70) and Cronbach's alpha of 0.917 is greater than 0.70 (0.917 > 0.70), it can be concluded that the Employee Performance variable (Y) is stated to be reliable.
4. The Work Engagement (Z) variable obtained a composite reliability value of 0.951 is greater than 0.70 (0.951 > 0.70) and Cronbach's alpha of 0.942 is greater than 0.70 (0.942 > 0.70), it can be concluded that the Work Engagement (Z) variable is stated to be reliable.

b. Test Structural Model (Inner Model)

Inner modelwhich is usually also called (inner relation, structural model and substantive theory) describes the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The inner model in this study includes t-statistic and R square significance tests. The results of the inner model test in this study can be described as follows:

1. Coefficient of Determination Test (R2)

The R-square test aims to measure the level of variation in changes in independent variables to dependent variables. The R-square value has criteria if the R-square value is 0.02 then it shows a small influence, a value of 0.15

shows a moderate influence and a value > 0.35 shows a large influence at the structural level (Hair et al., 2022). The results of the R-square test in this study can be seen in the table below:

Table 8. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test (R2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0.775	0.768
Work Engagement(Z)	0.775	0.768

The results of the R-square test on the Employee Performance variable (Y) obtained an R-square value of 0.775 with a large category (0.775 > 0.35). This indicates that the Workload (X1) and Service Innovation (X2) variables have a large influence in predicting the Employee Performance variable.

(Y) of 77.5%. (0.775 x 100%). And in the Work Engagement variable (Z) the R-square value is 0.775 with a large category (0.775 > 0.35). This indicates that the Workload (X1) and Service Innovation (X2) variables have a large influence in predicting the Work Engagement variable.

(Z) of 77.5%. (0.775 x 100%).

2. Statistical t Significance Test

The t-statistic significance test was conducted to determine the influence between exogenous and endogenous variables partially. The t-statistic significance test was conducted using a significance level of 5% and comparing the t-statistic value with the t-table (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023). The t-table value was obtained based on the df (degree of freedom) formula, namely df = n - k = 102 - 4 = 98, so the t-table value was 1.98447. The results of the t-statistic significance test can be explained as follows:

Table 9. Significance Test Results (t-Statistic)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Workload (X1) -> Performance Employee (Y)_	0.818	0.841	0.14	5,859	0
Service Innovation (X2) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0.012	-0.008	0.141	0.086	0.931
Work Engagement (Z) -> PerformanceEmployee (Y)	0.539	0.544	0.076	7,067	0
Workload (X1) -> *Work Engagement*(Z)_	1.106	1,098	0.097	11,433	0
Service Innovation (X2) -> Work Engagement (Z)	-0.299	-0.286	0.135	2.223	0.028
Workload (X1) -> Performance	0.597	0.598	0.099	6,000	0
Employee (Y) -> Work Engagement (Z)					
Service Innovation (X2) -> Employee Performance (Y) -> Work Engagement (Z)	-0.161	-0.156	0.077	2.104	0.038

The results of the t-statistic significance test in the table above can be described as follows:

1. The Workload variable (X1) on Employee Performance (Y) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 5.859 which is greater than 1.98447 (t-statistic 5.859 > t-table 1.98447) with a P-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), this shows that the Workload variable (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y).
2. Variables Innovation Service (X2) to Performance Employee (Y) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 0.086 which is smaller than 1.98447 (t-statistic 0.086 < t-table 1.98447) with a P-value of 0.931 which is greater than 0.05 (0.931 < 0.05), this

shows that the Service Innovation variable (X2) has no effect on Employee Performance (Y).

3. The Work Engagement (Z) variable on Employee Performance (Y) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 7.067 which is greater than 1.98447 (t-statistic 7.067 > t-table 1.98447) with a P-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), this shows that the Work Engagement (Z) variable has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y).
4. The Workload variable (X1) on Work Engagement (Z) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 11.433 which is greater than 1.98447 (t-statistic 11.433 > t-table 1.98447) with a P-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), this shows that the Workload variable (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Work Engagement (Z).
5. The Service Innovation variable (X2) on Work Engagement (Z) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 2.223, which is greater than 1.98447 (t-statistic 2.223 > t-table 1.98447) with a P-value of 0.028, which is less than 0.05 (0.028 < 0.05), this shows that the Service Innovation variable (X2) on Work Engagement (Z)2) has a positive and significant effect on WorkEngagement(Z).
6. The Workload variable (X1) on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z) shows that the t-statistic value obtained is 6,000 is greater than 1.98447 (tstatic 6,000 > ttable 1.98447) with The P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), this shows that the Workload variable (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z).
7. The variable of Service Innovation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z) shows that the t-static value obtained is 2.104 which is greater than 1.98447 (tstatic 2.104 > ttable 1.98447)

with a P-value of 0.038 which is smaller than 0.05 (0.038 < 0.05), this shows that the Service Innovation variable (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z).

Conclusion

Based on the research results that have been described, there are conclusions in this research, namely as follows:

1. Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
2. Service Innovation (X2) has no effect on Employee Performance (Y) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
3. Work Engagement(Z) has a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance (Y) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
4. Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Work Engagement (Z) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
5. Service Innovation (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Work Engagement (Z) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
6. Workload (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.
7. Service Innovation (X2) has a positive and significant effect onEmployee Performance (Y) through Work Engagement (Z) at the Kuala District Health Center UPT, Langkat Regency.

Suggestion

Based on the research results and discussion, the researcher provides the following suggestions:

1. Suggestions for Further Researchers

Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that further researchers can conduct further research by expanding the variables that can affect employee performance in the health service sector, such as external factors that can affect workload and service innovation. Researchers are also advised to use larger samples or different locations so that the research results can be more representative and generalizable. In addition, further research can dig deeper into the factors that affect work engagement, such as organizational culture or job satisfaction, as well as the long-term impact of workload and service innovation on employee performance.

2. Suggestions for UPT Puskesmas

Based on the findings of this study, the UPT Puskesmas Kuala District, Langkat Regency is expected to pay attention to workload management and provide support for service innovation to improve employee performance. The Puskesmas should provide training to improve employee skills in dealing with high workloads and encourage them to be involved in developing service innovations. In addition, considering the positive influence work engagementregarding performance, the Health Center needs to create a work environment that supports more active employee involvement, both in improving service quality and in decision-making related to improving the service system.

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