Research Article

Impact of Employee Motivational Strategies on Public Service In Tanzania: A Case of Dodoma City Council

Richard Sikira[1], Prof. Ambrish Sharma[2], Dr. Gideon Sikawa[3]

[1,2]Institute of Business Management and Commerce, Mangalayatan University, Beswan, Aligarh India
[3]Institute of Accountancy Arusha Tanzania.

Email: - rsikira@gmail.com, Email: - ambrish.sharma@mangalayatan.edu.in

Abstract

Employee motivation is widely regarded as an important organisational resource for improving performance and service delivery. However, evidence concerning the extent to which employee motivational strategies (EMS) are associated with public service (PS) outcomes in Tanzanian local government remains limited. This study assessed the association between EMS and PS in Dodoma City Council (DCC), Tanzania.

A mixed-methods approach and descriptive research design were employed. Quantitative data were collected from 351 public servants using a closed-ended questionnaire, while qualitative evidence was obtained through unstructured interviews with heads of departments and units. Simple random sampling was used for the questionnaire respondents and purposive sampling for interview participants. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and simple linear regression. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis.

The five motivational indicators recorded means ranging from 3.40 to 4.01. Recognition from superiors had the highest mean (M = 4.01, SD = 1.001), followed by autonomy in decision-making (M = 3.91, SD = .917) and career growth and development opportunities (M = 3.88, SD = .941). EMS was positively and significantly associated with PS, although the association was weak in magnitude, $r = .163$, $p = .002$, $N = 351$. Regression analysis produced $R = .163$, $R^2 = .027$, adjusted $R^2 = .024$, $F(1, 349) = 9.503$, $p = .002$. Thus, EMS explained 2.7% of the observed variance in PS in this model. The EMS coefficient was positive and statistically significant ($B = .151$, $SE = .049$, $\beta = .163$, $t = 3.083$, $p = .002$). Interview evidence reinforced the quantitative findings by emphasising recognition, fair compensation, career development, autonomy and supportive working conditions.

The null hypothesis that EMS has no significant impact on PS in DCC was rejected on the basis of statistically significant association and predictive evidence. Nevertheless, the weak association and low explained variance indicate that EMS is only one of several factors related to PS. Because the study used a cross-sectional, self-report design, the findings should not be interpreted as definitive causal evidence.

Keywords: Employee motivational strategies, public service, local government, employee performance, Tanzania.

1. Introduction

Public organisations depend on employees' commitment, competence and willingness to exercise discretionary effort in order to provide responsive and reliable services, and these workforce outcomes are consistently tied to how employees are motivated (Adoniya et al., 2024; Lu & Chen, 2022). Employee motivation strategies may include extrinsic arrangements, such as compensation and benefits, which can strengthen organisational commitment even where their direct effect on performance is limited (Foo et al., 2025; Sudha et al., 2024), as well as intrinsic or relational practices, including recognition, autonomy, career development and supportive working conditions, which research links more strongly to engagement and performance (Mehmood et al., 2024; Vandenabeele & Breaugh, 2024).

Evidence from public-sector research suggests that motivation is not reducible to financial rewards: intrinsic drivers such as public service motivation and meaningful work, social exchange, and organisational support for development may all shape employee commitment and performance, and a focus on monetary incentives alone can even weaken these relational drivers (Chen et al., 2024; Jung & Moon, 2024; Kravariti et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Ciobanu et al., 2019; Nchimbi & Korojelo, 2021).

In Tanzania, the effectiveness of local government authorities is closely connected to the quality of their human-resource practices. Research conducted in Tanzanian public institutions has associated motivation with service delivery through factors such as salaries, allowances, working conditions and career development (Mlangala & Samson Thomas, 2022). Similarly, evidence from Kakonko District Council indicates that monetary and non-monetary rewards may both contribute to employee motivation, although the effects of particular strategies are not uniform

(Buyekwa et al., 2024). Recognition has also been reported as positively related to employee performance in Tanzania's public service (Mwalukoba & Abayo, 2023).

The relevance of motivational strategies is also supported by wider public-management evidence. High-performance human-resource practices may influence employee outcomes through public service motivation, affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (Mostafa et al., 2015). At the same time, public-sector incentive systems require careful implementation because performance-related pay may generate hidden costs and may not produce uniformly positive outcomes (Weibel et al., 2009). These observations suggest that the relationship between motivational strategies and public service should be examined empirically within specific institutional settings.

Dodoma City Council provides a relevant setting for such an examination. Recent research at DCC has reported positive relationships between monetary motivation, non-monetary motivation, work-life balance strategies and job satisfaction (Balili, 2025). However, job satisfaction and public service are related but distinct outcomes. The present study therefore intends to assess the association between employee motivational strategies and public service in Dodoma City Council, Tanzania.

The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H_0: Employee motivational strategies have no significant impact on public service in Dodoma City Council, Tanzania.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is informed primarily by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Public Service Motivation theory.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. Compensation, benefits and working conditions can reduce dissatisfaction, whereas recognition, achievement, responsibility and opportunities for advancement may stimulate greater satisfaction and effort. This theoretical distinction is relevant to the present study because EMS includes both contextual factors such as compensation and the work environment and more intrinsically oriented factors such as autonomy, recognition and career development. Herzberg's theory has also been used in recent Tanzanian studies examining employee motivation and job satisfaction (Balili, 2025; Kipara, 2025).

Public Service Motivation theory adds a public-sector perspective by emphasising employees' intrinsic orientation towards serving citizens and advancing public values. Research in Tanzania indicates that public personnel may be strongly motivated by intrinsic factors, rather than by extrinsic rewards alone (Nchimbi & Korojelo, 2021). This perspective is important because motivational practices may influence public service not only through material incentives but also by strengthening employees' sense of trust, responsibility, recognition and contribution to the public interest.

The two theoretical perspectives are complementary as Herzberg's framework explains how organisational conditions and motivators may shape employees' work attitudes and effort, while Public Service Motivation theory explains why public employees may respond particularly strongly to meaningful work, responsibility and opportunities to serve citizens.

2.2. Empirical Review

Several studies in Europe, Asia, Africa and Tanzania illuminate the practices concerning motivational strategies in public service. In Italy, Spano et al. (2024) found evidence from Italian municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants that monetary rewards were not significantly associated with job quality or either form of motivation, whereas recognition, autonomy and participation in setting objectives were more consequential. Methodologically, the study utilised a randomly selected 30 percent sample and 240 questionnaires. For public service, the evidence supports broader reward systems incorporating recognition and empowerment, while cautioning that managerial reforms should not assume that additional financial incentives automatically improve performance.

Another study by Farooq et al. (2026) conducted a cross-country comparison of public sectors in Pakistan and China, which examined public service motivation, performance, and the moderating influence of individual- and team-oriented rewards within contrasting cultural environments. The study found that public service motivation was positively linked to performance, with Chinese employees showing greater preference for team-based rewards and Pakistani employees slightly favouring individual incentives. Its comparative design usefully demonstrates that motivational strategies are culturally contingent, but the available account provides limited information about sampling, measurement, and statistical procedures, making the robustness and generalisability of the comparison

difficult to assess. The implication is that public organisations should align incentives with prevailing cultural and work-group orientations rather than importing a uniform reward model across national settings.

At the Ghana Lands Commission, an explanatory quantitative study surveyed 332 officials through stratified sampling across subdivisions located in the capitals of all 16 regions (Asumadu et al., 2025). Regression analysis showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation significantly improved land-service delivery, with intrinsic motivation having the slightly stronger effect, while internal reforms strengthened the intrinsic motivation to service delivery relationship and external reforms did not. These findings suggest that public-service improvement requires meaningful work and supportive internal systems alongside material incentives, particularly where administrative reforms are intended to convert employee motivation into reliable services.

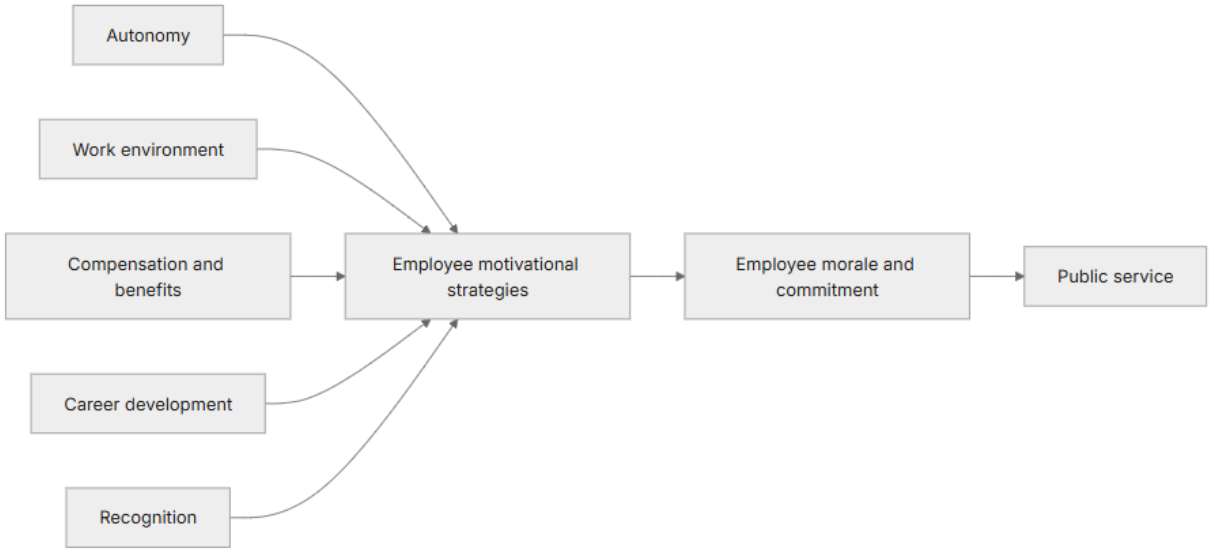
The Mvomero District Council case study combined questionnaires and key-informant interviews with 78 respondents to investigate motivation and local-government performance (Njunwa, 2024). The study reported a positive relationship between motivation and performance, while finding that financial incentives were valued more highly than non-financial motivation and that rural employees were less motivated than their urban counterparts. The mixed-methods design provides useful contextual explanation, but the small, single-council sample substantially limits generalisability. This study offers a practical implication that Tanzanian local-government policy should extend incentives and improved working conditions to ward, village and remote staff rather than concentrating benefits at senior levels.

Finally, the Tanzanian internal-marketing study modelled how organisational support reaches public-service delivery through employee motivation, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Makorere, 2025). Using a cross-sectional survey of 443 pensionable public servants across eight regions, convenience sampling and PLS-SEM indicated significant direct and indirect relationships between internal marketing practices and service-delivery performance. The relatively large, geographically distributed sample and mediation model are strengths, but convenience sampling, common-method self-reporting and cross-sectional data weaken population representativeness and causal claims. The study therefore implies that communication, employee support and internal alignment should be integrated into public-sector human-resource strategies, while also revealing the need for longitudinal research to determine whether such motivational pathways produce sustained improvements in service delivery.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model proposes EMS is positively associated with PS. EMS is operationally represented by five indicators, namely autonomy in decision-making; a conducive work environment; compensation and benefits; career growth and development opportunities; and recognition from superiors.

Figure 1: The Relationship Between EMS and PS



3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive research design. The study was conducted at Dodoma City Council in Tanzania. The setting was selected because local government authorities are responsible for the delivery and coordination of public services and therefore provide an appropriate institutional context in which to examine employee motivational strategies and public service.

The population consisted of public servants at Dodoma City Council. A quantitative sample of 351 respondents was drawn from this population. In addition, qualitative data were collected through unstructured interviews with heads of departments and units.

Simple random sampling was used to select respondents for the quantitative questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used to select heads of departments and units for the qualitative interviews because these participants were considered to possess relevant organisational knowledge.

Quantitative data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through unstructured interviews. Furthermore, quantitative data were collected from 351 respondents using a closed-ended questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through unstructured interviews with heads of departments and units.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were used to summarise the five EMS indicators. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between EMS and PS. Simple linear regression was used to estimate the predictive contribution of EMS to PS. Qualitative interview data were analysed through content analysis. The analysis identified recurring themes and used interview evidence to contextualise the quantitative results.

4. Results

4.1. Participant and Sample Statement

The quantitative analysis comprised 351 respondents and all five descriptive indicators had 351 valid observations. Qualitative evidence was obtained from interviews with heads of departments and units.

4.2. Descriptive Results

The descriptive results are presented in Table 1. Recognition from superiors had the highest mean score (4.01), followed by autonomy in decision-making (3.91) and career growth and development opportunities (3.88). A conducive work environment has 3.56, meanwhile compensation and benefits had the lowest mean score (3.40) and the largest standard deviation (1.288), suggesting comparatively greater variation in respondents' assessments of this indicator.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for employee motivational strategy indicators

Indicator	Valid N	Mean	Standard deviation
I am given autonomy in decision-making related to my job responsibilities	351	3.91	.917
The work environment in my organization is conducive to enhancing high performance	351	3.56	1.034
The provided compensation and benefits package motivate me to perform better	351	3.40	1.288
The career growth and development opportunities provided by my organisation increase job satisfaction	351	3.88	.941
The recognition from my superiors increases my work morale	351	4.01	1.001

The pattern indicates that non-financial and relational practices, namely particularly recognition, autonomy and career development, were rated relatively highly. This is consistent with evidence that public employees may respond to intrinsic and social forms of motivation in addition to financial incentives (Nchimbi & Korojelo, 2021). The comparatively lower mean for compensation and benefits also accords with the possibility that monetary rewards alone may not fully account for public-sector motivation (Weibel et al., 2009).

4.3. Correlation Between EMS and PS

Through the collected and analysed data, the study sought to determine a correlation between EMS and PS, and the regression model likewise enters EMS as the predictor. The results are therefore reported as the EMS–PS relationship.

Table 2. Pearson correlation between employee motivational strategies and public service

Variable	EMS	PS
EMS: Pearson correlation	1	.163**
Significance, two-tailed	—	.002
N	351	351
PS: Pearson correlation	.163**	1
Significance, two-tailed	.002	—
N	351	351

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, two-tailed.

EMS had a positive and statistically significant association with PS, r = .163, p = .002, N = 351. The positive association is weak in magnitude but statistically significant. Therefore, the evidence indicates that higher reported EMS scores were associated with higher reported PS scores, although the strength of the relationship was limited.

4.4. Regression Model Summary

Table 3. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.163a	.027	.024	.50658
a Predictors: (Constant), EMS				

The model produced R = .163, R^2 = .027 and adjusted R^2 = .024. Thus, EMS explains 2.7% of the observed variance in PS in this model. The remaining 97.3% of observed variance is associated with factors not included in this simple regression model and with unexplained variation. The value of R^2 is not evidence that EMS causes 2.7% of public-service; rather, it is the proportion of observed variance statistically accounted for by EMS in this model.

4.5. Analysis of Variance

Table 4. ANOVA for the regression model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.439	1	2.439	9.503	.002b
	Residual	89.561	349	.257		
	Total	92.000	350			
a Dependent Variable: PS						
b Predictors: (Constant), EMS						

The regression model was statistically significant, F(1, 349) = 9.503, p = .002. This indicates that EMS provided statistically significant predictive information about PS relative to a model containing only the constant.

4.6. Regression Coefficients

Table 5. Regression coefficients for EMS predicting PS

Model	Unstandardised coefficient B	Std. error	Standardised coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.988	.186		16.062	<.001
EMS	.151	.049	.163	3.083	.002

Dependent variable: PS.

The EMS coefficient was positive and statistically significant (B = .151, SE = .049, β = .163, t = 3.083, p = .002). Holding the model specification constant, a one-unit increase in EMS was associated with a .151-unit increase in the predicted PS score. This coefficient shows a statistical association and prediction rather than proof of a causal effect.

4.7. Hypothesis Decision

The null hypothesis stated that EMS has no significant impact on PS in DCC. Because the correlation and regression results were statistically significant at p = .002, the null hypothesis was rejected in statistical terms. The conclusion is appropriately stated as follows: EMS was positively and significantly associated with, and statistically predicted, PS. The result does not establish definitive causation.

5. Qualitative Themes Integrated with Quantitative Findings

The results from the interview provide substantive explanations for the observed positive relationship between EMS and PS. The interview participants were the heads of departments/units.

5.1. Recognition, Support and Accountability

A head of department/unit explained that "employee motivation is central to improving public service performance" and emphasised that employees who feel "recognized, supported, and trusted" become more committed to delivering quality services. The participant further associated career development and acknowledgement of outstanding performance with enhanced morale and accountability.

This evidence is consistent with the relatively high descriptive rating for recognition from superiors (M = 4.01). It also helps explain why recognition may be relevant to PS beyond its influence on immediate morale. Recognition can communicate organisational appreciation, reinforce desired service behaviours and strengthen accountability. Tanzanian evidence similarly reports a positive relationship between recognition and employee performance (Mwalukoba & Abayo, 2023).

5.2. Fair Compensation and Effort Beyond Minimum Expectations

Another head of department/unit stated that "recognition and fair compensation motivate employees to exceed minimum performance expectations". The participant linked motivation with dedication, reduced absenteeism and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

This account complements the quantitative finding that compensation and benefits received the lowest mean of the five indicators (M = 3.40), while also displaying the greatest variability (SD = 1.288). The result does not imply that compensation is unimportant. Rather, it suggests that perceptions of compensation may be less consistently favourable than perceptions of recognition or autonomy. The interview evidence also supports the view that compensation is most useful when implemented fairly and alongside non-monetary practices.

Research from Tanzania has similarly recommended integrating monetary and non-monetary rewards rather than treating either category as sufficient on its own (Buyekwa et al., 2024). Moreover, public-sector research cautions that performance-related pay may entail hidden costs and may produce modest or conditional effects (Weibel et al., 2009).

5.3. Autonomy, Innovation and Ownership

A head of department/unit reported that allowing staff to make decisions within their responsibilities improves "efficiency and innovation". The participant explained that empowered employees are more proactive in addressing service-delivery challenges and take greater ownership of public-service outcomes.

This theme corresponds with the relatively high mean for autonomy in decision-making (M = 3.91). It is also consistent with evidence that autonomy, task significance and feedback are relevant job characteristics for public servants' performance and work involvement (Johari & Yahya, 2016). Within the present study, autonomy may therefore represent an important mechanism through which EMS is connected to PS as employees who are trusted to exercise judgement may respond more quickly to operational problems and feel greater responsibility for service outcomes.

5.4. Supportive Working Conditions and Coordination

A further head of department/unit stated that "a supportive and conducive work environment encourages teamwork and collaboration, thereby improving productivity and service coordination". The participant added that employees who feel valued and supported are more willing to commit additional effort to organisational objectives.

This evidence gives context to the work-environment mean of 3.56. Although this score was not the highest among the five indicators, the interview account indicates that working conditions may influence PS through cooperation, communication and coordination.

This is consistent with research arguing that supportive work environments can improve public employees' performance, self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Ciobanu et al., 2019). It also accords with Tanzanian experience that working conditions are relevant to service delivery in local government (Mlangala & Samson Thomas, 2022).

5.5. Integration of the Mixed-Methods Findings

Taken together, the qualitative themes provide plausible organisational mechanisms for the weak but statistically significant quantitative relationship. Recognition, autonomy, career development, fair compensation and supportive working conditions appear to operate as mutually reinforcing components rather than isolated interventions. Nevertheless, the small R^2 indicates that these motivational strategies account for only a limited proportion of the observed variation in PS. The qualitative findings therefore enrich interpretation in this study but does not alter the statistical magnitude of the relationship.

6. Discussion

This study examined the association between EMS and PS in DCC. The results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship, r = .163, p = .002. The regression model was also statistically significant, F(1, 349) = 9.503, p = .002, with EMS explaining 2.7% of the observed variance in PS. The findings support the expectation that employee motivation is relevant to public service, but also demonstrate that the relationship is weak in magnitude.

The positive direction is consistent with Tanzanian research linking motivational factors to public-service delivery. Evidence from Chamwino District Council identified salaries, allowances, working conditions and career development as relevant to service delivery (Mlangala & Samson Thomas, 2022). Similarly, recognition has been associated with improved employee performance in Tanzania's public service (Mwalukoba & Abayo, 2023). The present findings extend this literature by estimating the overall EMS–PS relationship at DCC and by combining the estimate with interview evidence from heads of departments and units.

The descriptive results suggest that recognition may be particularly salient. Recognition from superiors recorded the highest mean (4.01), and the interview evidence repeatedly emphasised appreciation, trust and acknowledgement. This is compatible with Herzberg's distinction between contextual conditions and motivational factors. Recognition, career development and autonomy may function as motivators by strengthening employees' sense of achievement, responsibility and organisational value. Recent research in Kasulu Town Council likewise identified recognition and rewards, career development, organisational support and good working conditions as important organisational strategies (Kipara, 2025).

In this study, autonomy also received a relatively high mean (3.91), and interview evidence connected decision-making authority with innovation and ownership. This finding is consistent with research on public servants showing that autonomy, task significance and feedback can contribute to performance through work involvement (Johari & Yahya, 2016). Autonomy may be especially relevant in public services where employees encounter complex and context-specific citizen needs that cannot always be addressed through rigid procedures.

The result for compensation and benefits requires a robust interpretation. Compensation had the lowest mean (3.40) and the largest standard deviation (1.288), indicating less favourable and more varied perceptions than those associated with recognition or autonomy. This does not justify dismissing monetary incentives. Studies in Tanzania report positive effects for salary increments and merit pay, while also showing that different reward components may have different effects (Buyekwa et al., 2024). However, the wider public-sector literature warns that pay-for-performance arrangements can generate hidden costs and may not automatically improve performance (Weibel et al., 2009). The qualitative evidence in this study supports a balanced approach in which fair compensation is combined with recognition, career development and supportive management.

Furthermore, this study found career growth and development as a driver of job satisfaction (mean = 3.88, SD = .941). The higher mean for this item suggests that development opportunities contribute more strongly to satisfaction than the work environment, and the literature ranks career advancement as a leading influence. In another study, Bula (2025) found that career development practices (skill development, goal-setting, mentoring and support) explained 79.3% of the variance in job satisfaction, with career mentoring the strongest predictor. Reinforcing this, a sequential mediation study of Portuguese public servants showed that training raises job satisfaction by building competencies that improve performance appraisal and, in turn, enable career progression, highlighting career advancement as the mechanism through which development translates into satisfaction (Da Silva & Rodrigues, 2025). Both studies therefore explain why the employees here rated career growth and development as the more powerful motivator.

Finally, descriptive results regarding the work environment as a driver of high performance (mean = 3.56, SD = 1.034) indicates that employees perceive their working conditions as supportive of high output, a perception the literature consistently validates. A study of public-service employees at the Makassar City Transportation Agency found that the work environment, together with work motivation, had a positive and significant effect on employee

performance, concluding that a conducive physical and psychosocial environment shapes civil-servant performance (Baharuddin, 2025). Likewise, applying the Job Demands-Resources framework to South Africa's Department of Public Works, another study showed that ergonomic workspace design and a supportive, collaborative organisational culture jointly improve comfort, motivation and performance, positioning the enabling work environment as a strategic lever for public-sector productivity (Matutyana & Nqabeni, 2026).

7. Conclusion

This study assessed the relationship between employee motivational strategies and public service in Dodoma City Council, Tanzania. The findings showed that respondents rated recognition, autonomy and career development relatively highly, while compensation and benefits received the lowest mean and the greatest variation.

EMS was positively associated with PS, but the association was weak in magnitude and statistically significant, $r = .163$, $p = .002$. The simple regression model was statistically significant, with $R^2 = .027$, meaning that EMS explained 2.7% of the observed variance in PS in this model. The null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of statistically significant association and predictive evidence.

The qualitative results reinforced the quantitative results by highlighting recognition, fair compensation, autonomy, career development and supportive working conditions as perceived contributors to employee morale, accountability, innovation, teamwork and responsiveness. Nevertheless, the study does not establish definitive causation. EMS should be understood as one component of a broader set of organisational and institutional conditions influencing public service.

8. Recommendations

DCC should institutionalise transparent recognition mechanisms linked to clearly defined service and organisational objectives.

Managers should combine recognition, career development, autonomy and supportive supervision with fair compensation and benefits.

Employee perceptions of motivational strategies should be reviewed periodically through structured feedback and organisational assessments.

DCC should link motivational initiatives to measurable service-delivery indicators while avoiding narrow incentive systems that may create unintended effects.

Human-resource managers should provide clear career-development information and ensure that promotion and development opportunities are administered fairly.

Future evaluations should use both employee perceptions and objective or supervisory indicators of public service where possible.

Policy-makers should avoid assuming that a single motivational intervention will improve public service across all local-government contexts.

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