

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY: INSIGHTS FROM THE CAMPUS RETAIL UNIT OF UIN SUNAN GUNUNG DJATI

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Abstract

Service quality in campus retail increasingly depends on human resource capability and operational discipline, making it essential to understand how these elements shape customer experience. This study aims to examine the role of human resource development, operational discipline, and interpersonal competence in enhancing service quality within campus retail units. The theoretical framework refers to Human Resource Development 4.0, High-Performance Work Systems, and Customer Experience Quality. This research employs a qualitative case study design through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal that continuous training, consistent SOP implementation, and staff interpersonal competence significantly strengthen service stability and responsiveness. These results highlight the need for integrating human development and operational systems to achieve adaptive, customer-oriented service performance.

Keywords: human resource development, campus retail service, operational discipline

A. INTRODUCTION

Intensifying competition across service sectors increasingly pressures organizations to strengthen human resource capacities as a strategic asset shaping the overall customer experience, as evidenced by empirical findings on the influence of human capital on service quality (Rakhmatto & Hidayah, 2022). Human interactions within service encounters remain a primary determinant of customer satisfaction, given that behavioral consistency, staff competence, and service readiness collectively form customers' perceptions of service value (Lucia-Palacios et al., 2020). Recent studies further demonstrate that training initiatives, skills development, and the enhancement of operational competencies significantly contribute to service effectiveness in both public and retail sectors (Anggraini et al., 2024). Service transformation, moreover, does not rely solely on technological adoption but also on how organizations structure work processes and operational standardization to deliver more stable and predictable service outcomes (Situmorang et al., 2024). Consequently, investing in human resource development becomes a critical foundation for organizations seeking to sustain service quality amid rising expectations among modern customers (Alfani et al., 2024).

The service management literature underscores that service quality emerges from the interaction between human competence, clarity of standard operating procedures, and a work culture that supports responsiveness and consistency (Rahman et al., 2022). Organizations implementing competency-based human resource management practices are demonstrably better positioned to maintain service reliability and accuracy in the face of fluctuating customer demands (Alfani et al., 2024). In retail settings, frontline employees exert a direct influence on customers' perceptions of service value and satisfaction, particularly in

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fast-paced and high-contact interactions (Lucia-Palacios et al., 2020). Additional evidence also indicates that high-quality service positively shapes customer satisfaction and loyalty across a wide range of modern service contexts (Dam & Dam, 2021). Taken together, these findings affirm that robust and consistent human resource management practices constitute a strategic cornerstone for achieving superior and sustainable service performance.

This context becomes increasingly salient for the retail unit under the Business Development Center of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, which serves high daily student traffic with demands for rapid, accurate, and friendly service. Fluctuating customer flows from morning to evening require staff performance consistency and operational workflow effectiveness to handle variations in service volume. Field observations, however, indicate irregularities in operational standards, variations in staff skills, and inconsistencies in service interactions. Such conditions heighten the risk of uneven service experiences, particularly when operational processes are misaligned with the capabilities of the personnel executing them. These dynamics underscore the need for a more structured managerial approach to assess how human resources and operational practices can be enhanced to deliver campus retail services that are more consistent and customer-oriented.

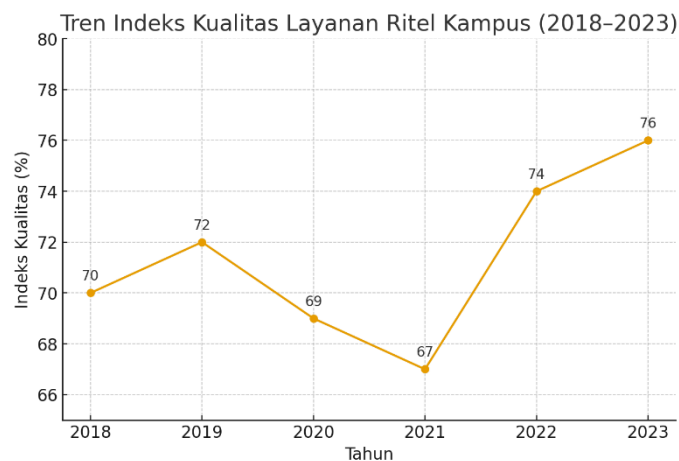


Figure 1. Campus Retail Services Quality Index
Source: Researcher Processed, 2025

Trends in the campus retail service quality index show a fluctuating pattern throughout 2018–2023. The index rose in 2019 before experiencing a sharp decline in 2020–2021, indicating operational instability. A significant improvement emerged in 2022 following strengthened human resource practices and the restructuring of service processes. The highest score recorded in 2023 reflects substantial gains in staff performance consistency and workflow discipline. Overall, this trend underscores that service quality improvements are strongly influenced by human resource capacity and operational discipline within the campus retail unit.

A number of previous studies offer critical insights into the relationship between human competence and service performance. Kim (2020) found that continuous training enhances responsiveness and customer satisfaction in public service settings, showing that service quality improves in tandem with the development of human capital. Osborne and Hammerschmid (2019) demonstrated that sustained service quality can only be achieved when organizations integrate human resource capacity with an adaptive operational culture. Likewise, Dwiyanto (2018) emphasized that the integrity and competence of service

personnel are core determinants of the effectiveness of any service system, regardless of organizational scale.

These studies share a common premise: service quality is significantly shaped by how organizations develop and manage their human resources—whether through training, cultivating adaptive culture, or strengthening the integrity of frontline staff. However, most of the existing studies were conducted in large-scale public service systems and governmental bureaucracies, where the emphasis often lies on structural reform rather than the micro-level operational dynamics occurring in daily service delivery units. Furthermore, limited research has examined how the direct interaction between staff competence, operational discipline, and customer perceptions unfolds within internal campus retail services—an environment that differs considerably from conventional public or private sector organizations.

These contextual differences form the basis of this study's originality, as it specifically investigates how human resource development and operational discipline contribute to service quality within a campus retail unit—a setting that remains underexplored yet exhibits unique managerial dynamics. By shifting the analytical focus from public sector bureaucracy to an internal university retail operation, this research broadens the understanding of service management and introduces a fresh perspective on how HR practices and operational processes function within smaller but interaction-intensive organizational environments.

The urgency of this study arises from the growing expectations of students as modern consumers seeking fast, accurate, and consistent services, while campus retail units often lack robust managerial frameworks to meet such expectations. Misalignment between expected service standards and the available human resource capacity may lead to customer dissatisfaction and hinder the development of campus business units as competitive service providers. Therefore, there is a need for research that can explain the mechanisms through which improvements in human resource competence and operational practices directly enhance service quality in campus retail units.

This study seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of how human resource development practices are implemented within the campus retail unit of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and how these practices shape working patterns and service experiences on the ground. Specifically, it explores how retail staff interpret their roles, competencies, and interactions in day-to-day operational processes. The study also investigates how workflows, standard operating procedures, and organizational dynamics are translated into the service practices experienced by customers. Moreover, it aims to identify key factors perceived by both staff and customers as determinants of service quality within the campus retail context. The findings are expected to provide context-specific insights that enrich the understanding of campus retail management and offer relevant recommendations for improving the performance of university business units.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Development 4.0

Human Resource Development 4.0 emphasizes the need for organizations operating in the digital era to strengthen human capabilities in ways that are both adaptive and technologically integrated in order to sustain service effectiveness. Mayer and Krupp (2020) demonstrate that competency development within the HRD 4.0 framework is a continuous process that extends beyond formal training, relying heavily on employees' ability to engage in self-directed learning amid rapid digital change. From a more technical perspective, digital literacy has become increasingly central, as service transformation is shifting toward automation and data-driven systems. Pillai et al. (2021) further assert that enhancing employees' digital capacities is a prerequisite for maintaining service quality in highly

digitized work environments. Accordingly, HRD 4.0 encourages organizations to view human resources not merely as operational executors but as strategic partners in modern service transformation. Indicators:

- Staff digital skills
- Technological adaptability
- Continuous learning capability
- Modern collaboration and communication
- Rapid problem-solving

High-Performance Work Systems 2.0

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) 2.0 extend the foundations of classical HPWS by highlighting the importance of balancing structured work systems with the operational flexibility required in contemporary service organizations. Boxall and Guthrie (2022) argue that high-performance systems rely not only on process standardization but also on the alignment between staff competencies, evaluation mechanisms, and sufficient autonomy to respond to evolving customer needs. Jiang and Messersmith (2021) similarly emphasize that organizations able to integrate intensive training with role clarity and space for innovation tend to achieve more stable service performance. Thus, HPWS 2.0 conceptualizes work systems as a strategic infrastructure that reinforces the foundation of service quality in fast-changing operational contexts. Indicators:

- Competency-based staff selection and training
- Clarity of operational roles
- Consistent work systems
- Work flexibility
- Individual autonomy and accountability

Customer Experience Quality

Customer Experience Quality (CXQ) is grounded in the understanding that modern customers evaluate service quality not only based on functional attributes but through the entire experience encountered throughout their service journey. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) explain that customer experience is shaped through a sequence of interconnected interactions, beginning with initial expectations and extending to post-transaction impressions. Homburg et al. (2023) add that emotional and interpersonal dimensions play an increasingly significant role, particularly in services involving direct contact and personalization. Moreover, service flow consistency, clarity of information, and the comfort of interactions are key determinants of a positive customer experience. CXQ therefore provides a comprehensive framework for assessing service quality as an end-to-end experiential process rather than a single touchpoint. Indicators:

- Customer emotions during service encounters
- Clarity of service flow and transaction ease
- Staff–customer interaction quality
- Perceived comfort of the service environment
- Consistency of pre- and post-transaction experience

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, as the research focuses on developing a comprehensive understanding of how work practices and service experiences are shaped within the campus retail unit of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The qualitative approach is deemed relevant because it enables the researcher to explore the meanings constructed by service providers and customers through their everyday experiences—insights that are difficult to capture through numerical or quantitative

measurements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Notably, the case study design provides a richer space for examining the phenomenon in depth within clear contextual boundaries, namely the operational environment of a campus retail unit as an integrated system (Yin, 2018). This method also offers flexibility to trace subtle nuances in human interactions, work patterns, and operational dynamics that are often overlooked in studies involving broader populations. Therefore, this approach is considered most appropriate for addressing research questions that privilege process-oriented understanding rather than simply measuring service outcomes.

The use of a qualitative method is grounded not only in the contextual nature of the research problem but also in the fact that the phenomenon under study relates closely to how individuals interpret their roles, competencies, and work practices amid shifting operational conditions. Issues such as varying staff capabilities, inconsistencies in SOP implementation, and customer perceptions of service quality cannot be sufficiently explained through statistical tests alone. Instead, they require a more reflective and in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of service staff and customers. Furthermore, campus retail environments possess unique characteristics—being more informal, rapidly changing, and interaction-intensive—making an exploratory approach essential to uncover the dynamics that truly occur in practice. In this regard, qualitative inquiry provides the greatest opportunity to authentically capture the voices, experiences, and interpretations of those directly involved in service delivery.

Data were collected using three complementary techniques that together provide a more holistic representation of the phenomenon. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and personal narratives of both staff and customers regarding service quality and operational challenges. Second, participant observation involved directly examining interaction patterns, service speed, workflow processes, and the operational atmosphere—elements that may not surface through formal interviews (Bowen, 2009). Third, document analysis was used to understand the organizational framework, including SOPs, work structures, and relevant internal records (Bowen, 2009). These techniques were integrated through triangulation to ensure that the findings are not only narratively rich but also credible and analytically robust.

The study employed purposive sampling, selecting informants based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in service processes (Miles et al., 2014). Key informants included retail staff such as cashiers, servers, baristas, and operational coordinators who are directly involved in daily service activities, as well as customers—primarily students—who possess sufficient interaction experience to assess service quality. When necessary, snowball sampling was used to access additional informants recommended by earlier participants, particularly when such referrals were deemed capable of enriching the understanding of the phenomenon. This approach ensures that the data collected are not only relevant but also reflective of the diversity of experiences present in the field. Ultimately, the final sample is expected to provide a comprehensive depiction of service practices and operational dynamics within the campus retail unit.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), consisting of several iterative stages conducted throughout the research process. The first stage, data reduction, involved organizing, simplifying, and focusing the data around core themes such as human resource competencies, operational patterns, and customer experiences. The second stage, data display, entailed summarizing the findings in thematic narratives, tables, or relational patterns to help the researcher grasp the broader picture more clearly and systematically. The third stage, conclusion drawing and verification, was carried out not only at the end but continuously to ensure consistency in the interpretation of findings. Importantly, this model allows for repeated reflection during analysis, enabling interpretations to remain sharp and

contextually grounded. Through this approach, the analysis extends beyond mere description to develop a deeper understanding of how HR practices and operational processes collectively shape service quality in the campus retail unit.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Peran Pengembangan SDM dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Layanan Ritel Kampus

The findings reveal that human resource development plays a far more significant role than merely enhancing the technical abilities of campus retail staff. Employees who participated in structured training programs not only demonstrated improvements in interpersonal skills but also exhibited notable changes in how they read customer situations, take initiative, and resolve daily operational problems. Interestingly, several staff members indicated that practical training—such as service simulations, SOP familiarization, and direct coaching—was more effective in shaping their work patterns compared to theoretical training, which they perceived as overly abstract. This suggests that targeted training helps build adaptive capacity while narrowing the gap between expected service standards and the operational realities encountered in the field. Thus, human resource development not only enhances technical service quality but also fosters a more proactive and customer-oriented work culture.

However, the findings also show that human resource development alone cannot achieve optimal impact unless it is integrated with adequate operational systems and a supportive work culture. During peak service hours, for example, improved staff skills were still hindered by inconsistent SOP implementation, unstandardized workflows, and insufficient supervision to ensure proper adherence to procedures. Such conditions highlight structural gaps that cannot be bridged solely by enhancing individual capabilities, as service quality emerges from the interaction between human competencies and the systems that guide their work. Critically, this indicates that organizations must manage two domains simultaneously: developing competent human resources and creating operational environments that allow them to perform optimally. Consequently, improvements in campus retail service quality depend not only on staff capability but also on the extent to which internal systems support consistency, accuracy, and smooth service processes.

These patterns align with prior research. Kim (2020) found that practice-based training directly enhances the quality of staff–customer interactions. Employees who received structured training exhibited improved interpersonal skills and greater sensitivity in reading and responding to customer needs—an outcome also emphasized in Homburg et al. (2023), who highlight the emotional and experiential dimensions of customer service. Staff testimonies in this study likewise affirmed that practical training formats such as simulations are more impactful than abstract materials, supporting the argument of Mayer and Krupp (2020) that competency development must be context-relevant to produce behavioral change. Taken together, the findings concur with existing literature, demonstrating that well-designed human resource development strengthens adaptive and customer-oriented work patterns.

Pendidikan, Kompetensi, dan Kapabilitas Interpersonal sebagai Fondasi Pelayanan

The findings indicate that formal education provides an initial framework for staff to understand their tasks, procedures, and responsibilities. Interestingly, however, not all employees with higher educational backgrounds were able to deliver superior service, as service quality appeared to be more strongly influenced by how individuals applied their interpersonal competencies in real situations. In the campus retail context, friendly interactions, the ability to listen actively to customer needs, and flexible responsiveness to sudden requests often shaped the customer experience more profoundly than technical knowledge alone. This pattern became evident when staff who possessed both basic technical

proficiency and interpersonal empathy were able to maintain service rhythm even under fluctuating customer volumes. These findings suggest that formal education must be complemented by soft-skills development to ensure that staff not only know what to do but also understand how to perform effectively in dynamic service environments.

Furthermore, differences in service quality between staff who participated in regular training and those who relied solely on work experience illustrate that experience does not always guarantee sustained competence. Without continuous skill updates, there is a strong tendency to revert to outdated work habits, particularly in service situations requiring quick adaptation to internal policy changes or new standards. In several cases, staff who had not completed recent training were noticeably less responsive to complaints and less consistent in adhering to SOPs, leading to uneven service quality across shifts. These findings critically show that continuous learning is not merely supplementary but rather a necessary mechanism for maintaining service accuracy, especially as organizations face increasingly complex operational demands. Thus, improving service quality in the campus retail unit cannot rely on work experience alone; it must be reinforced by structured training and competency-refreshment systems to ensure stable and customer-aligned service delivery.

While this study highlights that interpersonal abilities and continuous learning exert the strongest influence on campus retail service quality, several recent studies report contrasting patterns. Osborne and Hammerschmid (2019), for instance, argue that technical competence and administrative capacity often serve as dominant predictors of service quality, particularly in service environments that require strict procedural compliance—an emphasis that differs from the more flexibility- and empathy-driven dynamics observed in this study. Additionally, Pillai et al. (2021) suggest that long-term work experience has a more stable impact on employee performance than short-term training, a conclusion that contrasts with the present study's finding that regular training generates more significant improvements than experience alone. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) similarly found that operational process consistency and service-flow design exert greater influence on customer satisfaction than interpersonal factors—a conclusion that does not fully align with the campus retail context, which relies heavily on human interaction. These inconsistencies indicate that the effectiveness of training, interpersonal competence, and work experience depends greatly on the characteristics of the service environment, including operational rhythm, the level of discretion afforded to staff, and customer expectations. Consequently, the patterns observed in this study cannot be generalized across sectors.

Strategi Pengembangan SDM dalam Mendukung Kualitas Layanan

Table 1. HR Development Strategy, Form of Implementation, Impact on Campus Retail Service Quality

Strategy	Implementation	Impact on Service Quality
Internalization of ethical values	Work ethics training, service orientation, professional attitude training	Friendlier interactions, increased customer trust
Technology-based supervision	Digital attendance system, transaction monitoring, data-based evaluation	Faster service, minimal errors and controlled
Competency-based system	Staff selection based on ability, appropriate role placement	Staff are more competent in carrying out their duties and reduce errors

Strategy	Implementation	Impact on Service Quality
Sustainable capacity development	Technical training, service workshops, regular coaching	Staff are more adaptive and ready to handle customer needs
Customer feedback	Service surveys, digital suggestion boxes, satisfaction observations	Services are more responsive and oriented to student needs

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2025

Table analysis shows that improving the quality of campus retail services requires a combination of complementary HR strategies, not a single intervention. Internalization of ethical values forms the basis of friendly service behavior, while technology-based monitoring ensures consistency of such behavior in daily practice. Competency-based systems play an important role in placing staff in appropriate positions thereby reducing operational errors. Continuous capacity development maintains staff adaptability to rapid changes in service rhythms. Customer feedback then strengthens the overall strategy by providing real information for continuous service improvement.

Table analysis shows that improving the quality of campus retail services requires complementary HR strategies, in line with findings (Kim, 2020) which confirm that a combination of training and ethical practices can increase the consistency of service behavior. Internalization of ethical values is proven to strengthen service interactions, while technology-based monitoring supports quality consistency, as explained by (Osborne & Hammerschmid, 2019) in their study of digital system-based service accountability. Competency-based systems have also proven effective in reducing operational errors, consistent with Boxall & Guthrie's (2022) findings regarding the importance of capability-based placement in High-Performance Work Systems. Continuous capacity development strengthens staff adaptability to the dynamics of service demand, supporting the results of research by Mayer & Krupp (2020) on the importance of continuous learning in HRD 4.0. Customer feedback then becomes a reinforcing element in line with the Customer Experience Quality model from (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) which emphasizes the importance of organizational responses to customer experiences and expectations.

The Role of Operational Discipline in Stabilizing the Quality of Campus Retail Services

The findings indicate that operational discipline serves as a critical factor in maintaining consistent service quality, particularly in campus retail environments characterized by highly fluctuating customer demand. When SOPs are articulated clearly and followed consistently, staff are able to work in a more structured manner, thereby reducing transaction errors and minimizing service delays. Interestingly, several staff members reported that clear workflow guidance increased their confidence when serving customers, especially during peak hours with long queues. These findings illustrate that service quality is not determined solely by individual competencies but also by the extent to which the organization creates an orderly operational environment that supports staff performance. In this context, operational discipline is not merely procedural compliance; it functions as an essential mechanism that stabilizes the customer experience over time.

The strong role of operational discipline aligns with Jiang and Messersmith's (2021) claim that high-performing service environments can only be achieved when operational systems support employees through clear workflows, consistent supervision, and well-defined role distributions. Osborne and Hammerschmid (2019) likewise emphasize that process consistency is a key determinant of service quality, particularly in settings where customer interactions are fast-paced and repetitive, as is typical in campus retail units. Further, Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) research on customer experience suggests that operational inconsistency is one of the main drivers of declining service quality perceptions,

regardless of staff competency. Taken together, these findings reinforce the idea that human resource development can only produce optimal outcomes when balanced with well-designed, adaptive operational management capable of anticipating the dynamic nature of campus customer demand.

Despite the strong evidence from this study regarding the importance of operational discipline in maintaining stability and consistency in campus retail service quality, several recent studies point to contrasting conclusions. Osborne and Hammerschmid (2019) note that in certain public service contexts, operational flexibility is more valued by customers than strict procedural adherence, as opportunities for improvisation allow staff to respond more personally to user needs. Meanwhile, Pillai et al. (2021) find that overly formal operational structures can restrict staff creativity and adaptability, ultimately diminishing customer experience in dynamic service environments. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also observe that operational consistency does not necessarily produce better customer experiences if stable processes fail to keep pace with rapidly changing user preferences. These divergent findings suggest that the effectiveness of operational discipline is highly contextual. In campus retail settings, stable SOPs appear to strengthen service accuracy, whereas in other sectors, flexibility may play a more decisive role in shaping user satisfaction.

E. CONCLUSION

The results of this research conclude that the quality of campus retail services is strongly influenced by a combination of HR development, operational discipline, and staff interpersonal skills, where continuous training, consistent application of SOPs, and competency-based placement are proven to answer problem formulations related to the factors that shape service quality. These findings indicate that increasing human capacity not only improves technical skills, but also strengthens service responsiveness and stability, so that the research objective of understanding HR and operational dynamics in the campus retail context has been achieved.

This research provides a new contribution by revealing that the campus retail context has a service character that is highly dependent on human interaction and operational readiness, so that HR effectiveness cannot be separated from a supportive work structure. Therefore, in practical terms, management needs to strengthen practice-based training systems, standardize SOPs, and maximize the use of service monitoring technology so that service quality is more stable. Future research is recommended to explore customer emotional factors, use an ethnographic approach, or expand the locus to other campus service units to enrich understanding. This research still has limitations in the scope of observation and number of informants, so it needs to be expanded in the next study. The implication is that campus policy makers can consider designing service policies that are more integrated between human resources, technology and work culture to ensure the quality of campus retail services continues to improve in a sustainable manner.

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