Employee Engagement in the Emergency Department at Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah K in Jakarta: A Case Study

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C

The emergency department (ED) plays a critical role as the frontline of healthcare systems, serving as the primary entry point for patients who need immediate treatment related to life safety. The quality of care in the EDs not only influences patient satisfaction but also impacts employee engagement. Employee engagement is a multifaceted psychological construct that describes the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral commitment of employees to their job and organization. This study explores the factors influencing employee engagement among ED staff at RSUD K in Jakarta through a qualitative case study approach. Using in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and field notes, the research identifies key themes including teamwork, administrative workload, access to meals and rest areas, communication with the management, and the extent to which staff aspirations are considered. Findings reveal that strong teamwork enhances engagement, while lack of managerial support and inadequate facilities negatively impact morale and performance. The study underscores the importance of responsive leadership and supportive work environments in promoting staff engagement in ED.

INTRODUCTION

Patient safety is a global healthcare priority, with the World Health Organization (WHO) identifying it as a critical concern nearing epidemic levels (Flott, Fontana, & Darzi, 2019; WHO, 2020). Emergency departments (EDs) are at the forefront of this challenge, serving as the main entry point for urgent and life-threatening cases. The performance of EDs not only impacts patient outcomes and satisfaction but also reflects the well-being and engagement of healthcare professionals working under intense pressure (Angelica & Demiyati, 2023). In Indonesia, public hospitals face unique challenges due to overcrowding, limited infrastructure, and the administrative burden of the national health insurance program, Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial (BPJS) Kesehatan. While the system improves healthcare access, it often contributes to longer wait times and resource strain in EDs (Solida, Hildayanti, & Sandi, 2023). These conditions, combined with staff shortages, emotional stress, and minimal managerial support, can lower employee morale and engagement (Pont & Thalib, 2024).

Employee engagement, characterized by dedication, energy, and involvement at work, is increasingly recognized as a key factor in improving healthcare delivery, reducing turnover, and enhancing patient safety (Janes et al., 2021; Yandi, Ramadhan, & Mustika, 2022). However, global engagement levels are declining, falling to 31% in 2024, especially in high-stress sectors like healthcare (Harter, 2024). In EDs, occupational stress, unpredictability, and administrative burdens intensify disengagement, affecting both service quality and staff retention (Meyer et al., 2024; WHO, 2017). Although previous studies have examined employee engagement in general healthcare settings, limited research has focused specifically on EDs in Indonesia. Factors such as digital workload, patient surges, and emotional fatigue require a contextual understanding of engagement that accounts for frontline realities (Bernburg et al., 2024). Engaged staff are more likely to deliver quality care, report safety

concerns, and show resilience, while disengaged teams face burnout, reduced performance, and high absenteeism (Amalia, Indrawati, & Ruswanti, 2021; The King's Fund, 2015).
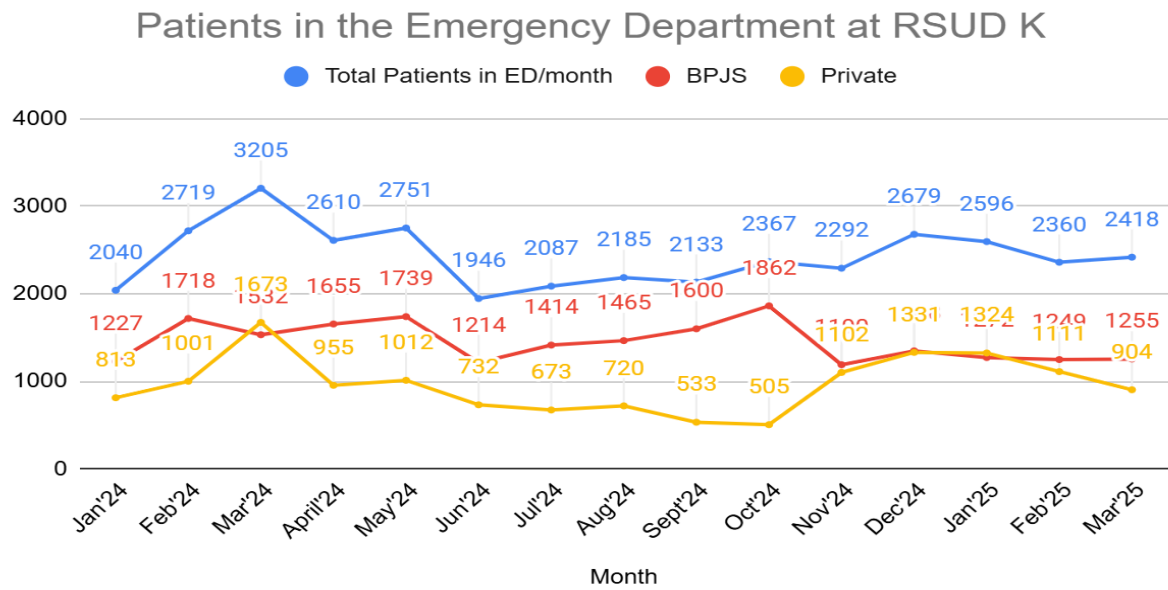

Figure 1. Number of ED Patients at RSUD K in Jakarta

This research aims to explore and analyze the factors influencing employee engagement in the ED of RSUD K in Jakarta using a qualitative case study approach. As shown in Figure 1. there was a fluctuation in the number of patients in the ED from January 2024 to March 2025. With different numbers of patients, ED staff experiences many challenges during the shift. By understanding staff experiences and workplace dynamics, this study offers insights that can help hospital leaders develop targeted strategies to enhance engagement, reduce burnout, and improve emergency service quality under Indonesia's national health system.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative case study design within the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm to explore the factors influencing employee engagement in the Emergency Department (ED) at RSUD K. The research was prompted by signs of staff disengagement, such as emotional exhaustion and reduced performance. RSUD K, a Type C referral hospital in West Jakarta, was chosen for its high-pressure ED environment. The researcher, also a general practitioner at the site, used purposive sampling to select six informants—nurses and general practitioners—with at least one year of experience and direct patient care roles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document reviews, focusing on themes such as motivation, job satisfaction, leadership, communication, and organizational support (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Interviews lasted 15–30 minutes and were conducted outside working hours. As an internal staff member, the researcher had access to daily operations, facilitating rapport and informal observations, while ensuring neutrality, confidentiality, and informed consent.

The data were transcribed and analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase approach to identify recurring themes and categories. Triangulation across professional roles (nurses and physicians) enhanced the trustworthiness and validity of findings (Patton, 2015). Identified themes were categorized into motivators, hygiene factors, communication, leadership, and psychological safety. Based on these themes, propositions were developed with the aid of a coding framework to reflect observable patterns and relationships. The results were then compared with existing theoretical models, such as

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1968) and Schein's Organizational Culture Model (Schein, 2010), as well as recent studies on healthcare worker engagement in Indonesia (Alghamdi et al., 2023; Lydia et al., 2023). The study concludes that employee engagement is shaped by a complex interplay of organizational, motivational, and cultural factors. Recommendations include enhancing recognition systems, improving staffing allocation, and strengthening communication frameworks. Future research may benefit from employing mixed method designs or comparing engagement patterns across multiple hospital settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. presents the profile of informants in this study. A total of six informants participated in the study, and all data were analyzed using thematic data analysis. According to Table 1., the informants consist of four GPs and two nurses, with at least one year working experience.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

Informant	Department	Gender	Age	Married	Years of Work
Informant 1	GP	Male	26	No	2 years
Informant 2	GP	Female	25	No	2 years
Informant 3	GP	Female	32	No	5 years
Informant 4	GP	Female	25	No	1 years
Informant 5	Nurse	Female	25	No	2 years
Informant 6	Nurse	Female	33	No	10 years

This study identifies seven key latent variables influencing employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K. Solid teamwork (V1) is essential for effective collaboration and coordination among ED staff, especially under high-pressure conditions, and is closely linked to increased work engagement (Heriyanto, 2025). Extra administrative work (V2), particularly tasks related to the BPJS referral system, adds to non-clinical burdens, reducing time for patient care and contributing to job dissatisfaction (Yuniar et al., 2024). Limited access to proper meals (V3) negatively affects health and energy levels due to irregular eating and reliance on unhealthy snacks, particularly given the hospital's residential location with limited food options (McSweeney et al., 2025). Similarly, inadequate resting areas (V4) hinder physical recovery and increase fatigue, ultimately lowering engagement (Smith & Jones, 2023). The lack of two-way communication (V5) between management and ED staff reduces trust and morale, while effective communication fosters empowerment and motivation (Balakrishnan et al., 2024; Kusumah et al., 2025). Another issue is when management fails to consider staff aspirations or concerns (V6), which can reduce a sense of value and belonging among employees, undermining engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2021). Finally, employee engagement (V7) itself is defined as a positive, work-related state marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Khan, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002) and is vital for employee satisfaction and performance.
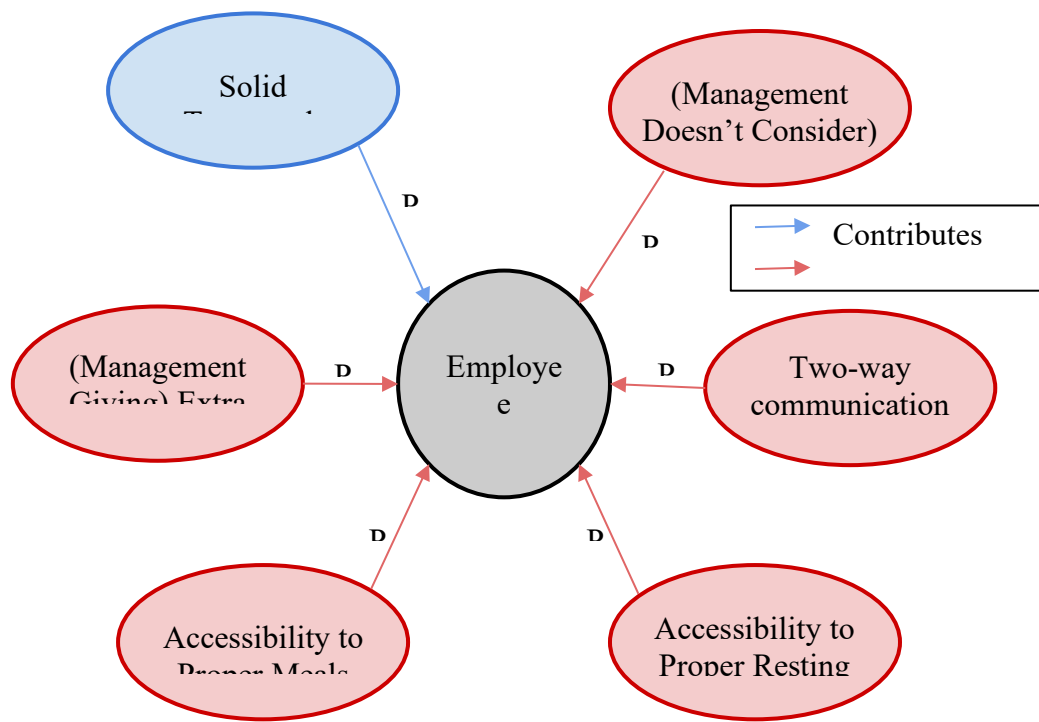
Figure 2. Mini Model Theory: Employee Engagement in the ED at RSUD X

Proposition 1 (P1): Solid Teamwork in the ED contributes positively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

Solid teamwork within the ED team is a pivotal factor enhancing employee engagement at RSUD K. In high-pressure environments like the ED, effective collaboration among healthcare professionals provides mutual support, shared responsibility, and psychological safety, leading to increased job satisfaction and commitment. The informants stated that in the ED of RSUD K, the team are all supportive and understanding towards each other, with a great teamwork. These findings suggest solid teamwork in the ED contributes positively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"The upside is that the atmosphere and environment in the ED are comfortable for teamwork. The ED team is cohesive and moves quickly when facing cases or problems. The team consists of mostly younger people, which helps." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"The team, both doctors and nurses, are supportive and understanding of each other." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"In the ED, the team works hand in hand, supporting each other in treating patients." - Informant 2, General Practitioner

"In my view, the ED team is very supportive and cooperative during shifts. " - Informant 3, General Practitioner

"I'm satisfied with the communication in the ED team, it's fairly effective, especially in emergency situations requiring quick response and coordination. The ED team is quite solid." - Informant 4, General Practitioner

"..I feel the ED team here provides a comfortable and supportive environment—even during hectic times," - Informant 5, Nurse

"..we have great teamwork, even when we're facing stagnant patient flow due to delayed referrals." - Informant 5, Nurse

"But we have excellent teamwork. From my experience, the ED team has very strong solidarity, which makes the work feel lighter." - Informant 6, Nurse

Proposition 2 (P2): (Management Giving) Extra Administrative Work (V2) contributes negatively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

In the ED of RSUD K, the assignment of additional administrative responsibilities related to the BPJS referral system has emerged as a significant factor impacting employee engagement. Healthcare professionals are often tasked with managing complex referral procedures, including the preparation of extensive documentation and coordination with multiple healthcare facilities such as the ambulance and also referral hospitals, including compiling documents such as BPJS cards, identity card, family card data, and clinical video evidence of the patient, then disseminating these through SPGDT WhatsApp groups to locate available hospital beds and facilities.

This extra workload adds cognitive and emotional strain, taking time away from direct patient care and reducing morale. This administrative burden not only diverts time and attention from direct patient care but also contributes to increased stress levels among staff. A study by Febrianti et al. (2024) highlighted a strong correlation between high administrative workload and elevated stress levels among nurses in Indonesian hospitals, emphasizing the need for workload management to maintain staff well-being. These findings suggest that management giving extra administrative work to the ED team contributes negatively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"As a result, many patients need to be referred for further evaluation, and the referral process can take days or even weeks." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"It gets worse when patients need referrals and we have to wait a long time, which leads to overcrowding and triggers fatigue." - Informant 3, General Practitioner

".. I sometimes feel overwhelmed in the ED, especially due to the limited facilities and difficult referral processes." - Informant 4, General Practitioner

"One source of dissatisfaction is the BPJS referral system. Since this is a type C hospital, we lack complete facilities and diagnostic tools. Patients needing advanced care must be referred to bigger hospitals with more specialized services. Unfortunately, the referral process often takes a long time." - Informant 5, Nurse

"So far, the main issue is patients having difficulty obtaining referrals, causing them to stagnate in the ED. " - Informant 6, Nurse

"I think management could help facilitate patient referrals or assign someone specifically to handle BPJS referrals, because while waiting, we can't monitor that process 24/7, we're busy handling other patients. Additionally, we need a better rest area for the ED team." - Informant 6, Nurse

Proposition 3 (P3): Accessibility to Proper Meals (lack of) (V3) contributes negatively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

Limited access to proper meals during shifts has been identified as a significant factor affecting employee engagement among ED staff at RSUD K. Healthcare professionals often face challenges in taking adequate meal breaks due to high patient acuity, staffing shortages, and the unpredictable nature of emergency care. This lack of regular, nutritious meals can lead to physical fatigue, decreased concentration, and increased stress levels, ultimately impacting job performance and satisfaction. A study by Landis et al. (2021) highlighted that nurses frequently skip meals or eat hastily, viewing breaks as a luxury rather than a necessity, which contributes to burnout and a desire to leave the profession. Additionally, Horton and Dawson (2020) found that hospital shift work and the demanding responsibilities of healthcare professionals significantly restrict freedom of movement, minimizing individual control over dietary practices. These findings suggest that lack of accessibility to proper meals contributes negatively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"No foods provided during our shifts," - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"This includes ensuring adequate staffing, providing proper rest areas, facilitating access to meals during shifts, and supplying the necessary tools and resources for staff to do their jobs effectively." - Informant 2, General Practitioner

"Firstly, providing better supporting facilities, such as a proper and comfortable rest area, access to meals or snacks during shifts," - Informant 3, General Practitioner

"..hospital doesn't provide meals during shifts. The hospital is located in a residential area, so it's hard to find food during work." - Informant 4, General Practitioner

"..there's no food provided during shifts. Given that the hospital is in a residential area, it's hard to find food or order online, especially since we can't leave while treating patients." - Informant 5, Nurse

"..., the hospital doesn't provide meals during shifts, and since we're located in a residential area, it's hard to find food while on duty." - Informant 6, Nurse

Proposition 4 (P4): Accessibility to Proper Resting Areas (lack of) (V4) contributes negatively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

The absence of adequate resting areas for staff in the ED at RSUD K has been identified as a significant factor impacting employee engagement and overall well-being. In high-stress environments like the ED, the opportunity for physical and mental rest is essential to sustain the energy and focus required for quality patient care. However, cramped or poorly maintained rest areas often prevent staff from recovering during shifts, contributing to fatigue and reduced job satisfaction. A study by Shechter, Fire & Miranda (2023) highlighted that sleep disturbances among emergency healthcare workers are closely linked to increased burnout levels, emphasizing the need for proper rest facilities. Additionally, a 2025 report by the UK's Health Services Safety Investigation Body (HSSIB) warned that staff fatigue, exacerbated by inadequate rest areas, poses a significant risk to patient safety and staff well-being. These findings suggest that lack of accessibility to proper resting areas contributes negatively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"Furthermore, the lack of proper rest areas also affects the performance of our ED team,.." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"This includes ensuring adequate staffing, providing proper rest areas, facilitating access to meals during shifts,.." - Informant 2, General Practitioner

"..such as a proper and comfortable rest area, access to meals or snacks during shifts," - Informant 3, General Practitioner

"We lack proper rest areas for the ED team,.." - Informant 5, Nurse

Proposition 5 (P5): Two-way communication between management and ED team (lack of) (V5) contributes negatively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

In the ED of RSUD K, the lack of two-way communication between management and frontline staff has emerged as a contributing factor to reduced employee engagement. When healthcare professionals feel that their voices are not heard or valued by leadership, this can result in feelings of demotivation, burnout, and detachment from institutional goals. Effective two-way communication is crucial in creating an inclusive work culture where feedback flows openly, and staff members are involved in decision-making processes. Kusumah et al. (2025) highlighted that internal communication significantly enhances employee engagement, which in turn improves performance among medical staff. These findings suggest that lack of two-way communication between the management and the ED team contributes negatively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"I also hope for more equitable leadership training so that each head of unit or supervisor can have better communication and empathy skills." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"By creating regular and open channels of communication, such as feedback sessions, anonymous suggestion boxes, or routine staff meetings, management can better understand the realities faced on the ground." - Informant 2, General Practitioner

"There needs to be better two-way communication between leadership, management, and staff, especially in decision-making." - Informant 4, General Practitioner

"When problems arise, they should listen to both sides and discuss them, not just reprimand frontline staff." - Informant 5, Nurse

"..open to criticism and suggestions, and be involved enough to understand field conditions, so they can improve them and help the hospital grow. Sometimes, patient complaints are heard more than the realities on the ground. That can be a problem and make our work environment uncomfortable." - Informant 6, Nurse

Proposition 6 (P6): (Management Doesn't Consider) Staff's Aspirations or Concerns (V6) contributes negatively towards Employee Engagement (V7)

In the ED of RSUD K, the perception that management does not adequately consider staff aspirations or concerns significantly affects employee engagement. When healthcare workers feel their voices are ignored, it can lead to demotivation, emotional fatigue, and a decline in performance. This dynamic aligns with the concept of "employee silence," where staff choose not to share input due to fear or a sense of futility. Recent evidence supports this concern: a 2024 survey by Press Ganey revealed that only 57% of healthcare workers felt their organizations acted on feedback, indicating a critical gap in leadership responsiveness (Press Ganey, 2024). Further, Kusumah et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of internal communication and responsive leadership in fostering employee engagement among medical staff. Therefore, promoting two-way communication and genuinely addressing staff concerns are essential strategies to improve morale and organizational performance. These findings suggest when management does not consider staff's aspiration or concerns, it contributes negatively to the employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K.

"To improve engagement in the ED, I think there should be more space for staff to voice ideas and suggestions about work processes." - Informant 1, General Practitioner

"One of the most important things hospital managements can do is to genuinely listen to the aspirations, concerns, and suggestions of the staff." - Informant 2, General Practitioner

"Secondly, it's important for management to be more responsive and open to feedback from the staff." - Informant 3, General Practitioner

"Lastly, management should be more involved in addressing the challenges we face on the ground." - Informant 3, General Practitioner

"Facilities should be improved so employees feel safe and comfortable—such as proper rest areas for ED staff, meals during shifts, and greater attention to our feedback rather than just patient complaints." - Informant 4, General Practitioner

"I also feel that management doesn't provide enough support. I think management should pay more attention to staff working on the ground, and not only focus on patient satisfaction, especially when it's based on negative feedback from patients." - Informant 5, Nurse

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the factors that contribute to employee engagement in the ED at RSUD K, Jakarta. The findings identified several key factors, both positive and challenging, that significantly contribute employee engagement within the ED at RSUD K. While the presence of solid teamwork stands out as a considerable strength, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, other latent variables present opportunities for improvement. Specifically, issues such as excessive

administrative workload, a lack of accessibility to proper meals, insufficient resting areas, inadequate two-way communication between management and the ED team, and a perceived disregard for staff aspirations or concerns act as significant hindrances to optimal engagement.

The results of this study provide managerial implications for the management in the ED of RSUD K. Prioritizing the provision of proper meals and dedicated resting areas, establishing two-way communication channels, demonstrating a proactive approach to understanding and addressing staff's aspirations and concerns will build trust and foster a more inclusive environment, to improve employee engagement. Furthermore, reconsidering and potentially redistributing extra administrative tasks will alleviate undue burden on the ED team, allowing them to focus more effectively on patient care. By strategically addressing these multifaceted factors, RSUD K can cultivate a work environment that not only leverages its existing strengths in teamwork but also actively supports and sustains high levels of employee engagement.

This research faced limitations as a single instrumental case study, meaning its findings might not be fully generalizable to other hospitals or EDs. Challenges also arose from translating interview transcripts from Bahasa Indonesia to English, potentially causing a loss of subtle meaning, and from shorter-than-planned interview sessions due to time constraints, leading to less optimal data collection. Moving forward, future research should aim for more in-depth interviews, consider conducting studies across multiple hospital settings or departments for better generalizability and comparative insights, and explore this research as a basis for future quantitative methods to eventually develop a grand theory.

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