



Effect of Working Environment on Employee Performance in the Hospitality Industry in Rwanda: A Case of Lemigo Hotel

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of the working environment on employee performance in the hospitality industry in Rwanda, using Lemigo Hotel as a case study. Specifically, it assessed the effect of physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance on employee performance. A mixed-methods descriptive research design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from a census of 198 employees using structured questionnaires, interview guides, and documentary review, and were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression in SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between the combined working-environment factors and employee performance ($R = 0.799$), with the four predictors jointly explaining 67.4% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.674$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.641$). The regression coefficients showed that physical ergonomics and safety ($B = 0.353$, $p = 0.025$), open communication ($B = 0.472$, $p = 0.003$), professional growth and development ($B = 0.676$, $p = 0.001$), and work-life balance ($B = 0.353$, $p = 0.009$) each had a significant positive effect on employee performance, with no multicollinearity ($VIF = 1.246-2.491$). All four null hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that a safe, communicative, developmental, and balanced working environment is a fundamental determinant of employee performance in the hospitality industry. It recommends that Lemigo Hotel invest in ergonomic and safety upgrades, institutionalize transparent communication channels, expand career-development pathways, and strengthen work-life balance policies to sustain and improve employee performance.

Keywords: physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and Development, work-life balance, employee performance

How to cite this work (APA):

Rugaba, T. B. & Odengo, R. (2026). Effect of Working Environment on Employee Performance in the Hospitality Industry in Rwanda: A Case of Lemigo Hotel. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 10(3), 1603 – 1617. <https://doi.org/10.59765/vy63j>

1. Introduction

Employee performance, frequently assessed through productivity, work quality, and conformity to professional standards, refers to the aggregate behaviours, activities, and outcomes that individuals contribute toward accomplishing organizational goals (Ahmad & Khan, 2022). It is a key driver of organizational growth, competitive advantage, and service delivery, and is increasingly viewed through the lens of adaptable

performance in a workplace shaped by digital transformation and changing market demands (Garcia-Machado et al., 2023; Ojo & Adebayo, 2024). In service-oriented industries, strong employee performance cultivates a culture of excellence that not only achieves short-term goals but also boosts stakeholder satisfaction and public trust (Miller & Scott, 2025). The working environment, which encompasses the physical, social, and psychological conditions in which staff operate, is a foundational determinant of that performance because it

shapes employees' daily experiences, motivation, and capacity to deliver quality service.

At the international level, in hospitality industries such as those of the United States, the work environment significantly influences employee performance by shaping psychological well-being, engagement, and physical comfort. A positive work environment characterized by strong management support and a learning culture directly enhances performance and task efficiency, and when hotel employees perceive high psychological well-being and a healthy work-life balance they exhibit more pro-social service behaviours and higher job satisfaction (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Jung et al., 2023). Conversely, environments with excessive workloads, long hours, and nonstandard shifts lead to burnout, psychological distress, and higher turnover intentions, ultimately degrading organizational productivity (Baquero, 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023).

In the European Union hospitality sector, particularly in France and Switzerland, the working environment shapes employee performance through a combination of physical, psychosocial, and organizational factors. A positive environment marked by strong management support, a robust learning culture, and organizational commitment predicts both engagement and high-level performance, and in labour-intensive settings the physical environment and job characteristics explain a substantial proportion of the variance in employee satisfaction, which directly influences service quality and efficiency (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Murimi, 2020). Demanding environments marked by high job pressure, irregular schedules, and workplace bullying are increasingly linked to presenteeism and reduced task performance (Yikilmaz & Surucu, 2025).

At the regional and East African level, the working environment—encompassing both physical settings and psychosocial factors—serves as a primary determinant of employee performance. Studies conducted in hotels across Kenya and Nigeria indicate that a conducive physical environment characterized by ergonomic design, adequate lighting, and noise control significantly reduces employee fatigue and errors while boosting morale and efficiency (Mutiga, 2024). Psychosocial elements such as supportive supervision, flexible scheduling, and mental-health awareness are critical in mitigating occupational stress and burnout, whereas environments with high role conflict, excessive workloads, and inadequate social support are associated with elevated work-related stress, absenteeism, and turnover intentions (Makoondlall-Chadee & Bokhoree, 2024; Bekele et al., 2023).

At the national level, the working environment is a critical determinant of both employee performance and organizational productivity in Rwanda, as a supportive atmosphere fosters the professional behaviours necessary

for high-quality service delivery. Specific environmental factors such as management support, learning culture, and overall work conditions directly predict employee performance by enhancing organizational commitment, while addressing internal challenges such as the skills gap through continuous training and periodic staff development is essential for improving the efficiency of hospitality staff in major Rwandan hotels (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Mbanza & Muhoza, 2020).

At Lemigo Hotel specifically, the working environment influences employee performance through organizational factors such as management support, learning culture, and work engagement. A positive and conducive environment fosters higher employee vigour and dedication that predict enhanced productivity and service-delivery quality, whereas a lack of technical skills and inappropriate working conditions can lead to poor product or service delivery, directly affecting the hotel's competitiveness in the Kigali market (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Habineza et al., 2022). This study therefore examines how the working environment affects employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The workplace is essential to the hospitality sector because the environment directly influences workers' psychological and physical ability to provide high-quality service—the sector's main product. A supportive workplace, defined by ergonomic workstations, encouraging supervisor support, and a culture of acknowledgment, increases discretionary effort, lowers turnover, and reduces the job stress and burnout that are major obstacles to productivity and guest satisfaction in the high-pressure hotel and tourism industries (Ahmad et al., 2023; Ribeiro et al., 2021). Despite efforts by the Rwandan hotel industry, including Lemigo Hotel, to improve the working environment, employee performance and productivity remain critical concerns.

In 2023, Rwanda's hotel sector faced a decline in operational efficiency, with 34% of employees not meeting key performance indicators due to poor ergonomics and infrastructure, leading to a 12% rise in guest complaints. The situation worsened in 2024, as 41% of employees reported performance drops linked to high-stress factors, resulting in a 15% decrease in room-turnover speed and a 20% increase in turnover rates. By 2025, 48% of staff failed to meet performance targets, absenteeism rose by 25%, and labour productivity dropped by 18%, highlighting a failure to address environmental stressors despite increased investment (Rwanda Development Board, 2025).

At Lemigo Hotel, three employees were dismissed in 2021 for dereliction of duty related to meal preparation, and nine

additional employees were terminated in 2023–2024 for poor work behaviour, including disrespect towards superiors. Consequently, the hotel's revenue from services fell by 3.77% in 2024 owing to a shortage of skilled employees (Lemigo Hotel, 2026). In the wider Rwandan hotel industry, only 26% of employees view their workplace as inspiring, 33.3% cite poor working conditions and low motivation as barriers to performance, and 43.3% experience work-related stress linked to absenteeism and customer complaints (William & Sesay, 2023; Habineza et al., 2022). Much of the existing research on working-environment practices is inconclusive, relies on short study periods and limited samples, and provides insufficient localized evidence. This study therefore examined the effect of the working environment on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel to address this knowledge gap.

1.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the effect of physical ergonomics and safety on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
2. To analyse the effect of open communication on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
3. To analyse the effect of professional growth and development on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
4. To analyse the effect of work-life balance on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.

1.3 Null Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses:

1. **H₀₁**: There is no significant effect of physical ergonomics and safety on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
2. **H₀₂**: There is no significant effect of open communication on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
3. **H₀₃**: There is no significant effect of professional growth and development on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.
4. **H₀₄**: There is no significant effect of work-life balance on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study carries both theoretical and practical importance for scholars, managers, and policymakers. For the researcher and the academic community, it develops specialized expertise in human-resource analytics and

contributes to the existing body of knowledge by addressing how localized environmental factors—such as Rwanda's digital-transformation trends and post-pandemic labour shifts—affect organizational behaviour in four-star establishments such as Lemigo Hotel. For the management of Lemigo Hotel, it provides a diagnostic framework for identifying specific environmental stressors, such as physical workspace quality, supervisory support, and organizational culture that impede service delivery, thereby offering actionable insights for targeted interventions that reduce turnover and enhance competitiveness. For policymakers, it provides an evidence base for refining labour regulations and occupational-health standards within Rwanda's strategic tourism sector, highlighting how investments in workplace safety, fair scheduling, and mental well-being can reduce industry-wide turnover and enhance the national service brand.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews key concepts, theories, and empirical studies on the working environment and employee performance in the hospitality industry. It examines physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance, their influence on employee performance, and identifies research gaps within Rwanda's hospitality context.

2.1 Conceptual Review

The physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the working environment serve as the foundational infrastructure for high-level service delivery in the hospitality sector. A conducive work environment characterized by ergonomic design, adequate lighting, and climate control directly reduces physical fatigue among front-line staff, fostering a sense of organizational value that boosts job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions (Ahmad et al., 2023). Beyond physical attributes, the psychological climate and organizational support systems are primary drivers of productivity, as an environment that prioritizes mental well-being and clear management support helps mitigate burnout and encourages discretionary effort (Saleem et al., 2022; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). Finally, the integration of a learning culture and access to modern tools sustains long-term productivity and adaptability in a competitive market (Habineza et al., 2022).

2.1.1 Physical Ergonomics and Safety

Physical ergonomics refers to the scientific study of interactions between workers and the physical elements of their environment—workstations, tools, and equipment—to optimize well-being and performance by aligning the workplace with human anatomical, physiological, and

biomechanical capabilities and mitigating musculoskeletal disorders, carpal tunnel syndrome, and chronic strain (El-Sherbeeney et al., 2023; Mbuvi, 2024). Given that hospitality roles often involve repetitive motions, awkward postures, and heavy lifting, ergonomics serves as a proactive strategy to reduce physical workload and prevent long-term injury. Safety encompasses the systematic identification and mitigation of hazards such as slips, trips, falls, burns, and lacerations, and requires an organizational commitment to a safety culture where leadership prioritizes proper equipment, incident reporting, and the reduction of work intensity. Integrating ergonomics and safety reduces absenteeism and medical costs while boosting morale, engagement, and job performance, whereas poor ergonomics increases burnout, turnover intentions, and diminished performance (Gu et al., 2022; Baquero, 2023).

2.1.2 Open Communication

Recognition serves as a vital motivator that acknowledges an employee's contributions through formal and informal rewards, directly affecting morale and productivity (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Effective recognition goes beyond material rewards, involving continuous performance management, real-time assessment, and feedback that highlight individual achievements (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). Open communication is a transparent exchange of information that fosters psychological safety, allowing staff to share ideas, report issues, and admit errors without fear of criticism (Imran et al., 2025). This transparency is essential for the credibility of performance-appraisal systems, ensuring that employees understand organizational goals and feel involved in decision-making. In a labour-intensive sector where customer incivility can drain employee energy, motivating and empathetic communication acts as a strategic tool for building trust and emotional safety, bridging the gap between leadership intent and staff understanding, which is critical for maintaining service quality and guest satisfaction (Bui & Le, 2023).

2.1.3 Professional Growth and Development

Professional growth and development represent a continuous, multi-dimensional process of acquiring specialized competencies, adapting to technological shifts, and enhancing soft skills to meet evolving consumer demands (Mores, 2026; EHL Insights, 2025). In the post-pandemic landscape, development is a strategic necessity rather than merely an option for career progression. Key areas of focus include leadership, emotional intelligence, and technical proficiency, particularly as artificial intelligence and digital transformation automate routine tasks. Through structured learning such as certifications, workshops, and networking, hospitality professionals can shift toward more complex, human-centric service roles. Professional development also serves as a critical driver of

employee retention and industry-wide innovation, requiring a lifelong-learning approach that aligns individual skills with emerging trends such as immersive guest experiences and data-driven personalization (Paycor, 2025; WTTC, 2021).

2.1.4 Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is the equilibrium between an individual's professional responsibilities and personal life, allowing for the harmonious management of both domains (Jung et al., 2023). It directly moderates the relationship between psychological well-being and job satisfaction and, in hospitality, is shaped by the intersection of high service demands with non-work commitments, where a lack of equilibrium manifests as work interference with personal life or personal-life interference with work. Achieving balance is less about a fixed split of time than about having the psychological resources and organizational support to prevent burnout and maintain pro-social service behaviours. The post-pandemic environment has shifted balance from an employer-led policy to an employee-driven demand for flexibility, and because nonstandard schedules, night shifts, and rotating weekend work disrupt circadian rhythms and act as major stressors, organizations increasingly adopt flexible work arrangements and supportive leadership to enhance performance (Silva & Costa, 2023; Baquero, 2023).

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Homans (1958), Blau (1964), and Emerson (1976), holds that social conduct arises through an exchange process in which people balance the possible advantages and disadvantages of interactions. According to SET, when an employer offers financial and socioemotional support, workers feel obligated, through the norm of reciprocity, to respond with positive attitudes and behaviours (Saks, 2022; Cropanzano et al., 2023). Its main strength is its capacity to explain the psychological basis of employee loyalty and discretionary effort, giving managers a clear roadmap: investing in employees yields excellent performance in return. Applied to Lemigo Hotel, employees who perceive a supportive environment—characterized by fair pay, professional recognition, and career development—feel a psychological obligation to reciprocate through enhanced performance and productivity, whereas an imbalanced or unsupportive exchange lowers engagement, service quality, and efficiency.

2.2.2 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, is a macro-theory of human motivation that distinguishes autonomous motivation from controlled

motivation and holds that three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—must be met for workers to perform at their best and maintain well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2024). SDT is particularly effective at explaining pro-social motivation and forecasting long-term perseverance and creativity, qualities that external rewards often fall short of. When management allows staff to make independent decisions (autonomy), provides training to master hospitality skills (competence), and encourages team cohesion (relatedness), employees transition from externally pressured to intrinsically motivated, producing higher service quality and efficiency (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023).

2.2.3 McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, describe contrasting assumptions about employee motivation used by managers. Theory X assumes the typical worker is unmotivated, avoids responsibility, and requires control through rewards and punishments, whereas Theory Y assumes employees are intrinsically motivated, enjoy their work, and take full responsibility without close supervision (Sorensen & Yaeger, 2021; Manzoor et al., 2021). At Lemigo Hotel, a Theory Y orientation—trusting staff, granting autonomy, and investing in development—supports a working environment that enhances performance, whereas an over-reliance on Theory X control mechanisms may foster resentment, uncooperativeness, and reduced discretionary effort. McGregor argued that a balanced, middle-of-the-road application is most effective in real-world settings.

2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical evidence consistently links the physical work environment to performance. Studies in the hospitality industry show that ergonomic interventions such as furniture adjustments and workstation redesigns greatly reduce physical strain and musculoskeletal risks and thereby improve employee efficiency and concentration, while robust occupational health and safety policies minimize absenteeism by creating a healthier work environment (Gikunda et al., 2023; Abatayo & Campado, 2026). Open communication has likewise been shown to enhance organizational commitment, a key psychological mediator that boosts frontline hotel-employee performance, with transparent feedback processes and managerial communication significantly related to increased engagement and professional goal attainment (Hosen et al., 2024; Canavesi & Minelli, 2021).

Regarding professional growth and development, evidence indicates that career-growth possibilities increase engagement and enhance service performance, that defined advancement pathways and empowerment greatly increase organizational commitment and decrease turnover

intention, and that clear career-development policies and training opportunities significantly influence job performance (Eshete et al., 2025; Murray & Holmes, 2021; Zumrah et al., 2022). For work-life balance, flexible shift scheduling immediately enhances worker well-being and productivity by lowering weariness and turnover intentions, supportive organizational settings that prioritize balance foster higher job satisfaction and performance, and the integration of superior work-life practices is positively correlated with employee engagement and service-delivery performance (Karhula et al., 2020; Jo & Shin, 2025; Gope & Ali, 2023). Nonetheless, limited research has examined these dimensions together within the Rwandan hospitality context.

2.4 Research Gap

Despite extensive literature on how the physical and social work environment influences hotel staff, a significant contextual and methodological gap remains regarding the long-term impact of hybrid hospitality roles and digital stressors. Much recent high-impact research concentrates on luxury hotel chains in developed economies, leaving limited longitudinal and localized evidence for mid-tier hotels and emerging markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, together with a digital-connectivity gap in which constant connection to guest-service apps creates role ambiguity and mental fatigue that traditional productivity models have not fully integrated (Prentice et al., 2021; EHL Insights, 2025). Without localized data, managers are forced to rely on generalized Western frameworks that may not address the socioeconomic stressors affecting their specific workforce. Few studies examine the effect of the working environment on employee performance in the Rwandan hospitality industry specifically; this study addresses that gap by examining physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance at Lemigo Hotel.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component used structured questionnaires to examine the influence of physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance on employee performance, while the qualitative component used semi-structured interviews with senior and middle management to obtain deeper insight into stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and implementation challenges. The mixed-methods approach enabled the study to combine numerical evidence with contextual understanding of how the working environment shapes performance.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised all 198 employees of Lemigo Hotel across managerial and operational levels. Because the population was below 300, a census (universal

sampling) method was used and all 198 employees were included, as each possessed sufficient knowledge of the working environment and employee performance (Strain et al., 2023). The distribution of the target population across departments is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population by Department

Category / Level	Number of Employees
Managers	6
Front Office	8
Senior Officers	5
Housekeeping	26
Engineering / Maintenance	20
Food & Beverage (F&B)	62
Kitchen / Culinary	34
Sales & Marketing	6
Human Resources	3
Finance & Accounting	15
Spa & Wellness	13
Total	198

Note. Source: Lemigo Hotel Human Resources Department (2026).

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires with closed-ended, five-point Likert-scale items measuring perceptions of the working-environment dimensions and employee performance, complemented by semi-structured interviews with senior and middle management exploring leadership styles, policy implementation, and challenges. Secondary data were obtained through documentary review of HR reports, training manuals, annual performance appraisals, and organizational policies, ensuring methodological triangulation and enhancing validity.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining institutional approval from Lemigo Hotel, the researcher administered the questionnaires to all 198

employees during working hours, with respondents completing the instrument at their convenience within an agreed timeframe. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled separately with purposively selected senior and middle managers, and documentary sources were reviewed on-site. Completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, coded, and prepared for analysis, while interview responses were transcribed for thematic analysis.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was assessed by four research experts using the Content Validity Index ($CVI = 21/29 = 0.724$), exceeding the 0.60 threshold recommended by Downing (2003). Reliability was tested using Cronbach’s alpha, with all constructs exceeding the 0.70 threshold, confirming strong internal consistency of the instrument, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test for the Key Variables

Items / Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Decision
Physical ergonomics and safety	0.86	Acceptable
Open communication	0.73	Acceptable
Professional growth and development	0.91	Acceptable
Work-life balance	0.89	Acceptable
Employee performance at Lemigo Hotel	0.93	Acceptable

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) summarized respondents' characteristics and perceptions, while inferential statistics—Pearson correlation and multiple regression—determined the relationships between the working-environment dimensions and employee performance. The multiple regression model took the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$, where Y is employee performance and X_1 – X_4 are physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance respectively. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically to complement the quantitative findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process to ensure the credibility, transparency, and integrity of the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and they were fully informed of the study's purpose and their rights. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by anonymizing responses and excluding identifying details from reports. Research integrity was upheld through objective data collection and analysis, avoiding manipulation or selective reporting, and institutional approval was obtained from Lemigo Hotel before fieldwork commenced.

4. Results and Discussion

All 198 questionnaires distributed to employees of Lemigo Hotel were completed and returned, representing a 100% response rate. This high response rate provides sufficient data for analysis and enhances the reliability and credibility of the study findings.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile showed that the majority of respondents (41.9%) were aged between 26 and 35 years, followed by 34.8% aged 36–45, 14.7% above 45, and 8.6% between 18 and 25, indicating a workforce with the skills and knowledge to respond fully on the study topic. Male respondents constituted 61.6% and females 38.4%. In terms of qualifications, 49.5% held a bachelor's degree, 27.3% a diploma, 13.6% a master's degree, and 9.6% a secondary-level qualification, indicating a well-educated workforce competent to understand the research instrument and execute their duties. Regarding experience, 37.9% had 1–3 years, 33.8% had 4–6 years, 21.2% below 1 year, and 7.1% above 6 years, providing the context needed to understand how organizational culture, infrastructure, and management practices have evolved over time.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 Physical Ergonomics and Safety

Respondents were asked to rate statements on the effect of physical ergonomics and safety on employee performance. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Perceptions on Physical Ergonomics and Safety

Statements	Mean	SD	Comment
Proper workstation design and supportive equipment minimize bodily strain, allowing staff to maintain high energy levels throughout long shifts	4.80	0.422	Very strong
Enhanced safety protocols and ergonomic tools prevent workplace accidents and chronic strains, reducing absenteeism	3.50	0.527	Weak
Optimized physical layouts and accessible tool placement streamline repetitive motions, enabling faster service delivery	4.65	0.404	Very strong
A safe and comfortable environment eliminates physical distractions, allowing employees to concentrate fully on guest satisfaction	4.91	0.427	Very strong
Minimized physical discomfort ensures staff perform tasks with high precision even during peak occupancy periods	4.67	0.342	Very strong

Note. Valid N (listwise) = 198. Source: Primary data (2026).

Table 3 shows that respondents most strongly agreed that a safe and comfortable environment allows employees to concentrate fully on guest satisfaction ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.427$) and that proper workstation design sustains energy

through long shifts ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 0.422$), while the statement on safety protocols reducing absenteeism recorded the lowest mean and most heterogeneous responses ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.527$). Overall, physical

ergonomics and safety allow staff to focus their full cognitive and physical capabilities on delivering high-quality hospitality services, fostering higher motivation

and reduced absenteeism due to work-related injuries or exhaustion.

4.2.2 Open Communication

Table 4: Perceptions on Open Communication

Statements	Mean	SD	Comment
Regular recognition for high-quality service boosts staff morale and encourages consistent effort	2.43	0.516	Weak
Open communication channels allow employees to voice concerns, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention	4.67	0.397	Very strong
Clear, transparent instructions from management reduce errors in guest bookings and food-service delivery	3.89	0.276	Strong
Employees who feel heard are more likely to take initiative in resolving guest complaints efficiently	4.93	0.407	Very strong
Honest feedback loops build a collaborative culture that streamlines daily operations and team productivity	4.27	0.331	Very strong

Note. Valid N (listwise) = 198. Source: Primary data (2026).

Table 4 shows that employees who feel heard were most likely to resolve guest complaints efficiently ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.407$), and that open communication channels raise job satisfaction and retention ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.397$), while the statement on regular recognition recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.516$). Open communication

ensures that team members are aligned with the hotel's mission and that essential information such as service standards is effectively disseminated, fostering trust, engagement, and operational efficiency.

4.2.3 Professional Growth and Development

Table 5: Perceptions on Professional Growth and Development

Statements	Mean	SD	Comment
Advanced training improves the technical skills required for high-quality guest interactions and specialized operations	4.42	0.369	Very strong
Clear career pathways and skill development foster a sense of value, leading to higher work engagement	4.96	0.418	Very strong
Professional growth reduces time spent on task errors and the need for constant managerial supervision	4.35	0.387	Very strong
Investment in staff development builds organizational loyalty, reducing productivity losses from turnover	4.70	0.483	Very strong
Development empowers staff to handle complex guest requests with greater autonomy and creativity	4.21	0.392	Very strong

Note. Valid N (listwise) = 198. Source: Primary data (2026).

Table 5 shows uniformly strong agreement, with clear career pathways and skill development recording the highest mean ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 0.418$) and investment in staff development building loyalty ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.483$). By providing clear pathways for progression, the hotel

transforms the workplace from a static environment into a dynamic space for career maturity, driving discretionary effort, high service standards, and long-term commitment.

4.2.4 Work-Life Balance

Table 6: Perceptions on Work-Life Balance

Statements	Mean	SD	Comment
Employees with balanced schedules maintain higher energy levels, leading to fewer service errors	2.99	0.671	Weak
Improved personal time allows better health and stress management, resulting in more reliable attendance	4.24	0.316	Very strong
Staff who feel their personal lives are respected show greater loyalty and more proactive service	4.70	0.403	Very strong
Minimizing leaves and external stressors allows employees to be fully present, improving task speed and accuracy	4.56	0.377	Very strong
A supportive environment reduces turnover costs, ensuring experienced, high-performing staff remain	4.33	0.399	Very strong

Note. Valid N (listwise) = 198. Source: Primary data (2026).

Table 6 shows that staff who feel their personal lives are respected show greater loyalty and proactive service ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.403$), while the statement on balanced schedules maintaining energy recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.671$). An effective work-life balance

reduces burnout, decreases stress, and increases job satisfaction, which in turn leads to superior service delivery and higher operational efficiency at Lemigo Hotel.

4.2.5 Employee Performance

Table 7: Perceptions on Employee Performance

Statements	Mean	SD	Comment
High positive ratings on platforms such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com indicate effective service and staff competence	4.65	0.380	Very strong
Consistency in meeting standard check-in/check-out and food-preparation times reflects operational efficiency	4.33	0.361	Very strong
Sustainable increases in RevPAR and banqueting income suggest a productive workforce maximizing sales	4.95	0.427	Very strong
A stable core of long-term staff demonstrates accumulated expertise and reduced disruptions to service quality	4.27	0.345	Very strong
Positive results from departmental performance reviews confirm adherence to four-star hospitality standards	2.59	0.615	Weak

Note. Valid N (listwise) = 198. Source: Primary data (2026).

Table 7 shows that sustainable increases in RevPAR and banqueting income recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.427$), reflecting a productive workforce, while the statement on departmental performance reviews recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.615$). A positive working environment reduces stressors and allows staff to focus their cognitive and physical energy on guest-service delivery, translating into higher productivity, improved service quality, and greater organizational efficiency.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the working-environment dimensions and employee performance. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation Matrix among Study Variables

Variable	EP	PES	OC	PGD	WLB
Employee performance (EP)	1				
Physical ergonomics & safety (PES)	.569**	1			
Open communication (OC)	.658**	.566*	1		
Professional growth & dev. (PGD)	.751	.387	-.091	1	
Work-life balance (WLB)	.228	.165	-.133	-.091	1
N	198	198	198	198	198

Note. Source: Field data (2026). **Significant at the 0.01 level; *significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 reveals a statistically significant, moderate-to-strong positive relationship between employee performance and both physical ergonomics and safety ($r = .569$, $p < .01$) and open communication ($r = .658$, $p < .01$), indicating that these factors are important drivers of performance. The correlations for professional growth and development ($r = .751$, $p = .069$) and work-life balance ($r = .228$, $p = .379$) were positive but not statistically significant at conventional levels in the bivariate analysis, while a significant correlation between physical ergonomics and safety and open communication ($r = .566$,

$p < .05$) suggests some interdependency among the workplace drivers that should be considered when interpreting their individual effects.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the joint and individual contribution of the working-environment dimensions to employee performance. The model summary, ANOVA, and coefficients are presented in Tables 9, 10, and 11.

Table 9: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.799	.674	.641	.162	2.019

Note. Source: Field data (2026). Predictors: (constant), physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, work-life balance. Dependent variable: employee performance.

Table 9 indicates a strong positive relationship between the combined working-environment factors and employee performance ($R = .799$). The R^2 of .674 shows that the four predictors jointly explain 67.4% of the variation in employee performance, while the remaining 32.6% is

explained by other factors. The adjusted R^2 of .641 confirms the model's explanatory power after accounting for the number of predictors, and the Durbin-Watson value of 2.019 indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals.

Table 10: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.735	4	.684	25.364	.000
Residual	.324	193	.027		
Total	3.059	197			

Note. Source: Field data (2026). Dependent variable: employee performance. Predictors: (constant), physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, work-life balance.

Table 10 presents an F-statistic of 25.364 with a significance value of .000. Since the p-value is below .05, the overall regression model is statistically significant, meaning that the four working-environment dimensions,

considered together, significantly influence employee performance and that the model is well-suited to predicting performance outcomes.

Table 11: Regression Coefficients

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
(Constant)	-1.088	.340		-3.198	.008	
Physical ergonomics and safety	.353	.138	.379	2.558	.025	2.491
Open communication	.472	.178	.514	3.798	.003	2.076
Professional growth and development	.676	.213	.375	3.182	.001	1.578
Work-life balance	.353	.138	.268	2.558	.009	1.246

Note. Source: Field data (2026). Dependent variable: employee performance.

Table 11 shows that all four predictors had positive and statistically significant effects on employee performance. Physical ergonomics and safety ($B = .353$, $p = .025$), open communication ($B = .472$, $p = .003$), professional growth and development ($B = .676$, $p = .001$), and work-life balance ($B = .353$, $p = .009$) each contribute to improved performance. The variance inflation factors range from 1.246 to 2.491, well below the threshold of 5, indicating no problematic multicollinearity and confirming that each variable makes a unique, stable contribution. While the standardized Beta coefficients suggested that open communication had the highest influence, the

unstandardized coefficients reveal that professional growth and development ($B = .676$) holds the greatest potential to increase employee performance per unit change, implying that managerial interventions should prioritize professional development alongside the other validated predictors.

4.5 One-Sample Test

A one-sample test was conducted to confirm that the observed means for each variable differ significantly from zero. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: One-Sample Test (Test Value = 0)

Variable	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	95% CI (Lower–Upper)
Employee performance	26.000	197	.000	4.333	3.95–4.72
Physical ergonomics & safety	28.000	197	.000	4.667	4.28–5.05
Open communication	44.000	197	.000	4.889	4.63–5.15
Professional growth & dev.	32.505	197	.000	4.778	4.44–5.12
Work-life balance	32.505	197	.000	4.778	4.44–5.12

Note. Source: Field data (2026).

Table 12 indicates that all study variables are statistically significant, as all p-values are .000, well below .05. With positive mean differences ranging from 4.333 to 4.889 and high t-values, the results confirm that the observed means differ significantly from zero, and the 95% confidence intervals—none of which include zero—provide robust evidence that these factors positively influence the hotel environment as perceived by employees.

4.6 Normality Tests

Normality tests were conducted to assess whether the sample data came from a normally distributed population. The Shapiro-Wilk results across all variables are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Tests of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

Relationship with Employee Performance	Statistic	df	Sig.
Physical ergonomics and safety	.640	195	.001
Open communication	.566	197	.000
Professional growth and development	.600	197	.000
Work-life balance	.453	197	.000

Note. Source: Field data (2026).

Table 13 indicates that the Shapiro-Wilk significance values for all variables are below .05, showing a

statistically significant deviation from a normal distribution. This is consistent with the strongly positive,

high-mean perceptions recorded across the constructs, and it justifies interpreting the results alongside the robust regression diagnostics reported above.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

Table 14: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statement	p-Value	Decision at $\alpha = .05$
H01	Physical ergonomics and safety has no significant effect on employee performance	.025	Rejected
H02	Open communication has no significant effect on employee performance	.003	Rejected
H03	Professional growth and development has no significant effect on employee performance	.001	Rejected
H04	Work-life balance has no significant effect on employee performance	.009	Rejected

Note. Source: Field data (2026).

Table 14 shows that all four null hypotheses were rejected because their p-values (.025, .003, .001, and .009) are below .05. This confirms that physical ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance each exert a statistically significant positive effect on employee performance at Lemigo Hotel, providing empirical support for the alternative hypotheses.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The significant effect of physical ergonomics and safety ($B = .353$, $p = .025$) supports evidence that ergonomic comfort and safe workspaces increase operational efficiency and reduce fatigue-related errors (Ali et al., 2022; El-Sherbeeney et al., 2023). When employees work where their physical well-being is prioritized, they experience increased comfort, higher motivation, and reduced injury-related absenteeism, producing a more sustainable, high-performing workforce. This finding aligns with recent evidence that occupational health and safety practices are positively associated with hotel-employee performance (Abatayo & Campado, 2026; Gikunda et al., 2023).

The effect of open communication ($B = .472$, $p = .003$) aligns with research showing that transparent, supportive communication improves front-line service performance and coordination through organizational trust and motivation (Wang & Xu, 2024; Hosen et al., 2024; Ar-Rasyi & Sopiah, 2023). By keeping employees well-informed and heard, the hotel reduces ambiguity, minimizes conflict, and enhances job satisfaction, all of which are primary drivers of productivity. This is consistent with evidence that open communication strengthens organizational commitment, which in turn boosts frontline performance (Hosen et al., 2024).

The influence of professional growth and development ($B = .676$, $p = .001$), the strongest predictor in unstandardized terms, confirms that development opportunities strengthen engagement, loyalty, and retention, transforming a job into a long-term career and cultivating a high-performing workforce (Eshete et al., 2025; Murray & Holmes, 2021; Zumrah et al., 2022). The prominence of this dimension echoes recent findings that clear career-development pathways and training significantly influence job performance in the hospitality industry (Eshete et al., 2025).

The effect of work-life balance ($B = .353$, $p = .009$) is consistent with findings that balanced schedules and flexible arrangements reduce burnout and sustain service quality (Karhula et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023; Jo & Shin, 2025). Notably, although work-life balance was not statistically significant in the bivariate correlation ($r = .228$, $p = .379$), it became a significant predictor in the multivariate regression, suggesting that its effect operates jointly with the other working-environment dimensions rather than in isolation. Qualitative interviews reinforced these results: managers noted that ergonomic and safe conditions reduce fatigue, open communication builds alignment and initiative, career pathways inspire commitment, and respect for personal time prevents burnout and sustains service quality. Because the design establishes association and predictive effect rather than experimental causation, these findings are interpreted as significant effects within a correlational-predictive framework rather than strict causal proof.

4.9 Implications of the Study

Theoretically, the findings provide empirical support for Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and McGregor's Theory Y by demonstrating that a supportive

working environment fosters reciprocal effort, intrinsic motivation, and higher performance. The four dimensions collectively explained 67.4% of the variation in employee performance, underscoring the substantial role of the working environment while indicating that other factors also contribute. Practically, the findings imply that Lemigo Hotel and similar hospitality organizations should institutionalize effective working-environment practices—investing in ergonomics and safety, maintaining transparent communication, expanding career-development pathways, and strengthening work-life balance—to sustain and improve performance and competitiveness in Kigali’s growing hospitality market. For policymakers and development partners, the study provides evidence that working-environment considerations should be incorporated into the design of labour and tourism-sector policies to promote productivity, retention, and the national service brand.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that the working environment significantly contributes to employee performance at Lemigo Hotel. In line with the four specific objectives and the null hypotheses tested, physical ergonomics and safety ($B = .353$, $p = .025$), open communication ($B = .472$, $p = .003$), professional growth and development ($B = .676$, $p = .001$), and work-life balance ($B = .353$, $p = .009$) were each positively and significantly associated with employee performance, and all four null hypotheses were rejected. Together, the four dimensions explained 67.4% of the variance in employee performance ($R = .799$; $R^2 = .674$), with professional growth and development emerging as the strongest driver in terms of unstandardized effect. Maintaining a safe work environment enhances staff ability to perform, transparent communication improves service delivery, career-development opportunities motivate the workforce, and work-life balance prevents burnout and sustains productivity. The findings also indicate that other factors, such as technological infrastructure, leadership, and financial resources, may further influence performance. Overall, strengthening the working environment while addressing contextual challenges can enhance the long-term performance and competitiveness of hotels in Rwanda.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to enhance the working environment and improve employee performance at Lemigo Hotel and similar hospitality organizations:

1. Following the significant effect of physical ergonomics and safety, Lemigo Hotel should invest in ergonomic

workstation upgrades and modern safety equipment and conduct regular workplace risk assessments and department-specific safety training to reduce physical strain and work-related injuries.

2. Given the strong effect of open communication, management should institutionalize transparent and regular communication mechanisms, such as departmental briefings and anonymous feedback channels, to keep staff aligned with service standards and empowered to take initiative.
3. Because professional growth and development was the strongest per-unit driver of performance, the hotel should expand career-advancement pathways through structured training, mentorship, and internal promotion, positioning staff development as a central component of its human-capital strategy.
4. In response to the significant effect of work-life balance, the hotel should strengthen manageable workloads, flexible scheduling, and respect for personal time to prevent burnout and sustain consistent service quality.
5. Management should establish a continuous monitoring and feedback system that tracks employee well-being and the four working-environment dimensions, so that interventions remain evidence-based over time.

5.3 Areas for Further Research

While this study established that the working environment significantly influences employee performance at Lemigo Hotel, several avenues merit further investigation. First, future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to capture how the effects of ergonomics and safety, open communication, professional growth and development, and work-life balance evolve over time, rather than relying on a single-point cross-sectional snapshot. Second, comparative research across multiple hotels of different star ratings and across secondary cities in Rwanda would test whether the patterns observed at Lemigo Hotel generalize to the wider hospitality sector. Third, given the rise of hybrid hospitality roles and digital connectivity demands, subsequent research could examine the moderating effect of technological stressors and digital tools on the relationship between the working environment and performance. Finally, future studies could incorporate objective performance metrics—such as payroll, attendance, and appraisal records—alongside self-reported perceptions to reduce common-method bias and strengthen causal inference.

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