



Reactive Maintenance Practices and Employee Job Performance: The Moderating Role of Management Support in Five Star-Rated Hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

 Akeyo Akinyi Winnie,  Nthiga Rita and  Uluma Brendah

*Department of Hotel and Hospitality Management
School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management, Moi University, P.O.
Box 3900-30100, Kesses, Eldoret, Kenya*

Corresponding author's Email: wakeyo88@gmail.com

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Abstract

Reactive maintenance remains prevalent in luxury hospitality, yet its human resource consequences are poorly understood. Drawing on Organizational Support Theory and the Conservation of Resources framework, this study examines how reactive maintenance practices influence employee job performance and whether management support moderates this relationship among maintenance staff in five-star hotels. A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was employed across all nine five-star-rated hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Quantitative data were gathered from 323 maintenance employees via structured questionnaires, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with nine maintenance managers. Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression were used to analyze the data. Correlation analysis revealed that reactive maintenance was significantly and negatively associated with employee job performance ($r = -.566, p < .01$), while management support was significantly and positively associated with performance ($r = .483, p < .01$). Hierarchical regression confirmed that reactive maintenance exerted a significant negative direct effect ($\beta = -0.478, p < .001, R^2 = .320$). The interaction between reactive maintenance and management support was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.579, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .047$),

indicating that management support amplified rather than attenuated the adverse effect. Conditional effects showed that at low levels of management support, reactive maintenance had no significant impact on performance ($\beta = -0.094$, $p = .380$), whereas at high levels of support, the negative effect intensified ($\beta = -0.737$, $p < .001$). Hotels should prioritize transitioning from reactive to preventive maintenance infrastructure rather than relying on managerial support alone to mitigate operational disruptions. Where immediate transitions are infeasible, leaders should recalibrate supportive communications to narrow the expectation-reality gap that drives performance erosion.

Keywords: Reactive maintenance, Management Support, Employee job performance, Five star rated hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is a major contributor to Kenya's economic growth, generating substantial foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities. Within this sector, five-star hotels operate in a highly competitive service environment where the physical condition of facilities directly influences guest satisfaction, brand reputation, and operational continuity (Chan et al., 2001). Maintenance management, which encompasses technical and managerial activities aimed at preserving equipment and infrastructure to ensure efficient operations and minimize disruptions, assumes a strategic role that extends beyond mere asset upkeep (Öztürk, 2019; Al Mbaidheen & Alawneh, 2017). Effective maintenance practices improve reliability, safety, and employee working conditions, thereby enhancing performance and productivity (Rahayu et al., 2019; Lai & Yik, 2012). Hotel maintenance practices are generally categorized into routine, corrective, preventive, and emergency strategies, each carrying distinct implications for workforce dynamics (Were & Maranga, 2022). Among these, reactive maintenance characterized by responding to equipment failures after they occur remains dominant in many hotel operations, particularly in developing economies where resource constraints complicate the adoption of systematic preventive programs (Makomere, 2014). While reactive approaches may appear cost-effective in the short term, they generate unexpected downtime, emergency repair premiums, overtime labor requirements, and heightened workplace stress that compromise service quality and employee wellbeing (ServiceChannel, 2026).

Employee job performance plays a critical role in hospitality success because high-quality service delivery directly influences customer satisfaction and organizational competitiveness. In hospitality settings, performance



constitutes a multidimensional construct encompassing task completion quality, initiative, safety compliance, and the capacity to deliver consistent service excellence under demanding conditions (Kurtessis et al., 2017). It is commonly categorized into task performance, relating to proficiency in assigned duties, and contextual performance, involving adaptive and proactive behaviors supporting organizational effectiveness beyond formal requirements (Koopmans et al., 2014), with scholars further emphasizing adaptability, proactivity, productivity, and efficiency as core dimensions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Maintenance employees in five-star hotels operate at the intersection of technical precision and service orientation, as their work directly influences guest experiences through the reliability of climate control systems, elevators, plumbing, and other critical infrastructure. When hotels rely heavily on reactive maintenance, employees encounter persistent job demands including unpredictable workloads, irregular hours, and the psychological pressure of addressing urgent failures under time constraints (Nawaz & Ansari, 2017). These demands can deplete personal and professional resources, leading to diminished performance, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement. However, the relationship between maintenance strategies and employee outcomes is not deterministic; it is shaped by contextual factors that either amplify or buffer the negative consequences of reactive work environments.

Management support emerges as a particularly salient contextual variable, reflecting the belief that key organizational figures are fully committed to supporting employees and endorsing initiatives that suit them (Arnéguy et al., 2018). In hotel maintenance management, leaders emphasize the importance of maintenance initiatives and encourage employees to participate actively, directing and inspiring staff to accomplish both maintenance-specific and overall organizational objectives (Lussier, 2011). This support involves providing necessary tools and resources from top management to effectively implement maintenance practices (Ismail et al., 2021), and senior executives significantly influence employee readiness and engagement through their approach and commitment to maintenance programs (Burnes, 2017; Cameron & Green, 2015). Employees develop generalized beliefs about their organization's commitment based on treatment from supervisory representatives, and these perceptions influence their willingness to exert effort and perform effectively (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2020). When management demonstrates tangible support through resource provision, recognition, and responsive leadership, employees may interpret reactive maintenance demands as manageable challenges rather than insurmountable stressors, sustaining or enhancing their job performance despite adverse conditions.



Nairobi City County host the highest concentration of five-star hotels in Kenya, including properties such as the Sarova Stanley, Villa Rosa Kempinski, Radisson Blu, and Sankara Hotel, which collectively set the benchmark for luxury hospitality in East Africa (Aberi, 2025). The Tourism Regulatory Authority classification system subjects these establishments to rigorous operational standards that implicitly require sophisticated maintenance systems, yet many Kenyan hotels continue to struggle with implementing structured preventive maintenance programs due to cost implications, lack of qualified personnel, and the absence of standardized procedures (Makomere, 2014; Were & Maranga, 2022). Research indicates that 73.3% of establishments lacked organizational master planners for equipment maintenance, and only 10% maintained designated maintenance departments, suggesting that reactive approaches may be more prevalent than officially acknowledged (Makomere, 2014). Were and Maranga (2022) further found that maintenance management practices explained 35.8% of variance in employee performance among three- to five-star hotels in Nairobi County, establishing a significant baseline relationship while revealing that nearly two-thirds of performance variation remains attributable to unexamined factors.

Although previous studies have examined maintenance management and operational performance in different contexts, limited research has focused specifically on the relationship between reactive maintenance practices and employee job performance with management support as a moderator in Kenyan hotels. Existing studies mainly emphasize reactive maintenance and operational efficiency, leaving a gap in understanding how different maintenance management practices and management support influence employee performance in the hospitality sector. The present study addresses this gap by examining how reactive maintenance practices influence employee job performance among maintenance staff in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya, with specific attention to the moderating role of management support.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Reactive Maintenance Practices and Employee Job Performance

Employee job performance is a multidimensional construct reflecting employees' effectiveness in achieving organisational goals through both task execution and behaviours that contribute to organisational success (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Beyond productivity and efficiency, job performance encompasses service quality, adherence to organisational standards, and behaviours that enhance overall organisational effectiveness



(Afshan et al., 2012). Griffin et al. (2007) conceptualise employee job performance through three interrelated dimensions: task proficiency, task adaptivity, and task proactivity. Task proficiency refers to the effective execution of core job responsibilities, task adaptivity reflects employees' ability to respond to changing work demands, while task proactivity captures self-initiated behaviours that improve work processes and foster innovation (Pulakos et al., 2000; Parker & Collins, 2010). In the hospitality industry, where service delivery relies heavily on frontline employees, these dimensions are essential for maintaining customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and organisational competitiveness (Karatepe, 2013).

One organisational practice with significant implications for employee performance is maintenance management. Maintenance management comprises the systematic planning, organisation, monitoring, and control of maintenance activities to ensure organisational assets remain reliable, safe, and operational (Aryee, 2011; Ghazi, 2016). While contemporary maintenance management increasingly emphasises preventive, condition-based, and predictive approaches that minimise equipment failure through proactive intervention (Dhillon, 2022), many organisations continue to rely on reactive maintenance. Reactive maintenance, also referred to as corrective or run-to-failure maintenance, is undertaken only after equipment failure occurs. Although necessary for addressing unexpected breakdowns, excessive reliance on this approach has been associated with increased downtime, higher repair costs, reduced asset reliability, and operational disruptions that adversely affect organisational performance (Ghazi, 2016).

In the hospitality industry, where uninterrupted operation of facilities such as heat ventilation and air conditioning systems, elevators, plumbing, electrical installations, and information and communication technology infrastructure is critical to service delivery, maintenance management plays a strategic role in supporting both employee effectiveness and guest satisfaction (Lai, 2013). Empirical studies in hotel engineering departments confirm that corrective maintenance dominates work orders, with air-conditioning works showing the highest variability due to unplanned demands, directly fragmenting technician work efficiency and disrupting scheduled tasks (Lai & Yik, 2012). Frequent equipment failures and delayed repairs resulting from reactive maintenance can disrupt employees' ability to perform their duties efficiently, reduce service quality, and hinder employees' capacity to adapt and respond proactively to customer needs.

In Nairobi County, Were and Maranga (2022) found that aggregated maintenance management practices significantly predicted employee performance, yet they did not isolate reactive maintenance as a distinct predictor, leaving unclear whether the reactive component drives this relationship. Industry benchmarking further indicates that properties with



reactive maintenance ratios exceeding 47% consistently report 35–40% higher maintenance costs per room and significantly lower staff efficiency compared to top-quartile performers who maintain reactive work below 20% of total maintenance hours (ServiceChannel, 2026). Excessive dependence on reactive maintenance contributes to unresolved facility defects, poor room conditions, lower customer satisfaction, and diminished organisational performance (Au-Yong et al., 2023). Despite these limitations, reactive maintenance remains widely practised in Kenya's hospitality sector (Nyambura & Njihia, 2021; Wanjiku & Wanjiru, 2022; Muriuki et al., 2022). Maintenance employees subjected to chronic reactive demands report unpredictable workloads, irregular hours, and heightened psychological pressure when addressing urgent failures under time constraints, conditions that deplete sustained effort and diminish both task and contextual performance (Nawaz & Ansari, 2017). This suggests that greater reliance on reactive maintenance may undermine employee job performance by creating work interruptions, increasing operational inefficiencies, and limiting employees' ability to deliver high-quality service. However, although previous studies have established that general maintenance management practices influence employee performance in Nairobi hotels, no empirical investigation has isolated reactive maintenance as a distinct strategic orientation or tested its direct effect on employee job performance within the five-star hotel segment. Existing Kenyan research aggregates maintenance approaches into composite indices, leaving unclear whether the reactive component drives the observed performance relationships, and the hospitality maintenance literature has prioritized operational and financial outcomes over human resource consequences, creating a significant void in understanding how breakdown-driven maintenance strategies shape workforce capabilities. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₀₁: Reactive maintenance practices have no significant effect on employee job performance.

Moderating Role of Management Support

Management support is a critical organizational resource that enhances employee effectiveness by ensuring that managers provide adequate resources, clear direction, recognition, and opportunities for employee participation (Arnéguy et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2021). Empirical evidence indicates that employees who perceive strong managerial and organisational support demonstrate greater commitment, work engagement, and improved job performance (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Managers facilitate this support by communicating organisational goals, providing performance feedback, allocating resources, and fostering a



supportive work environment that reduces uncertainty and promotes employee adaptability (Yukl, 2013; Kिरrane et al., 2017).

Empirical evidence consistently shows that management support enhances job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, psychological well-being, and employee resilience, leading to higher individual performance and service quality (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Aliddin et al., 2024). Within the hospitality industry, supportive leadership is particularly important because frontline employees operate in demanding service environments requiring rapid decision-making and effective customer service. By empowering employees, recognising their contributions, and providing the necessary resources, management support improves service performance, innovation, and customer-oriented behaviour (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017; Cheng & Yi, 2018; Utami et al., 2025).

Management support is equally essential for effective maintenance management. Leadership commitment ensures adequate investment in maintenance resources, personnel, and technology, thereby improving equipment reliability, workplace safety, and operational efficiency (Swanson, 2001; Alsyouf, 2007). Well-maintained facilities minimise operational disruptions and enable employees to perform efficiently, whereas inadequate management support can lead to equipment failures, service delays, and reduced employee performance (Parida & Kumar, 2006; Muchiri et al., 2011). Recent multilevel research demonstrates that managerial support significantly moderates the relationship between job demands and employee wellbeing, with supportive supervision attenuating anxiety and depression even when work demands remain high (Yunus et al., 2023). Specifically, interaction effects revealed that managerial support buffered the harmful consequences of demanding work environments, indicating that supportive leadership transforms stressors into manageable challenges rather than performance inhibitors. In banking institutions, perceived organizational support similarly moderated the negative relationship between work stress and frontline employee performance, such that employees under high stress maintained performance levels when they perceived strong managerial backing (Nawaz & Ansari, 2017). In five-star hotels, where service excellence depends on both employee capability and reliable physical infrastructure, management support is expected to directly enhance employee motivation and performance while indirectly improving performance through effective maintenance management (Kwenin et al., 2013). This relationship is particularly relevant in Nairobi's competitive hospitality sector, where supportive managerial practices contribute to employee commitment and organisational effectiveness despite resource constraints. However, while management support has been validated as a direct antecedent of performance and as a buffer in general stress-outcome relationships, its specific boundary role in



the relationship between reactive maintenance practices and employee job performance remains empirically untested within the Kenyan luxury hotel sector. Existing hospitality studies examine perceived organizational support and leadership as separate predictors of employee wellbeing, without testing whether management support conditions the impact of reactive maintenance strategies on maintenance staff performance, limiting understanding of whether leadership interventions can mitigate the human resource costs of reactive operational systems. Based on the empirical evidence reviewed, this study hypothesises that management support positively moderates the relationship between reactive maintenance practices and employee job performance by enhancing employee motivation, organisational commitment, access to operational resources, and effective maintenance management. To our knowledge, no study has been conducted to establish how management support moderates the relationship between maintenance management and employee job performance especially within the Kenya hotel industry. To address the gap, this study postulate that:

H₀₂: Management support does not moderate the relationship between reactive maintenance and employee job performance.

Theoretical Foundation

The study was guided by Organizational Support Theory and the Conservation of Resources framework. Organizational Support Theory suggests that management support can function as a critical job resource that moderates the relationship between reactive maintenance practices and employee performance by fulfilling socioemotional needs and activating norms of reciprocity (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Conservation of Resources theory argues that individuals strive to protect their personal and organizational resources, and psychological distress emerges when resource depletion outpaces resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989). Reactive maintenance practices inherently threaten resource conservation by imposing unplanned demands that disrupt work-life boundaries and accelerate burnout. Within the Job Demands-Resources model, job resources such as management support gain their motivational and buffering potential precisely when employees confront high job demands, making the interaction between reactive maintenance intensity and perceived support particularly worthy of investigation (Demerouti, 2025).

Methodology

The study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative employee surveys with qualitative managerial interviews to cross-validate findings within a single data collection phase. The



study was both descriptive and explanatory in orientation, seeking to portray current maintenance conditions while testing predictive relationships. All nine five-star-rated hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya constituted the research setting. The total population included 3,127 operational employees across these properties, supplemented by nine maintenance managers responsible for engineering departments. Every hotel and each maintenance head were purposively included given their direct relevance to the study phenomena. Employee respondents were selected through departmental stratification followed by simple random sampling, yielding 355 staff participants alongside the nine managerial informants.

Prior to full-scale administration, the questionnaire was piloted among 35 maintenance employees in a comparable four-star property to refine item and pilot responses were excluded from the final analysis. Data were gathered using self-administered structured questionnaires for employees and semi-structured face-to-face interviews for maintenance managers. The employee instrument captured responses on a five-point Likert continuum ranging from never to always. Reactive maintenance was operationalized through four behavioral indicators: unplanned emergency repairs, improvised alternative resource utilization, reactive workflow adjustments, and temporary facility shutdowns. Employee job performance was assessed across task proficiency, task adaptivity, and task proactivity. Management support, conceptualized as the moderating variable, was gauged through perceived managerial involvement, supervisory approachability, and tangible resource provision. Interview guides explored contextual factors including resource availability, staffing levels, training protocols, and leadership strategies that shape how reactive demands are managed within engineering departments. Anonymity was guaranteed to encourage candid responses, and all participation was voluntary with right of withdrawal clearly communicated. Written informed consent was obtained from every participant after explaining the study purpose, procedures, and confidentiality safeguards.

Of the 355 questionnaires distributed, 323 were returned fully completed, representing a 90.99% response rate. All nine interviews were conducted face-to-face, audio-recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Content and face validity were established through expert review by research supervisors and departmental colleagues who evaluated the instruments for representativeness, clarity, and domain coverage. Internal consistency was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs exceeding the accepted threshold. Exploratory factor analysis further verified the dimensional structure, supported by adequate sampling adequacy and significant sphericity. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically through open coding, category formation, and theme



development to identify patterns in managerial accounts that converged with or diverged from quantitative trends.

Data were edited, coded, and analyzed using SPSS version 27. Pearson correlation examined bivariate associations among variables. Ordinary least squares hierarchical regression tested the direct effect of reactive maintenance on employee job performance. To assess moderation, an interaction term was created by centering the predictor and moderator variables before computing their product to reduce multicollinearity. The estimating equation took the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 (X_1 \times M) + \varepsilon$, where Y represents employee job performance, X_1 denotes reactive maintenance, and M indicates management support. Prior to interpreting outputs, regression assumptions including linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, and absence of multicollinearity were verified through diagnostic plots and variance inflation factors.

Results

Measurement Instruments and Regression Diagnostics

Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement instruments and regression model were evaluated for internal consistency, dimensional structure, and statistical assumptions. Table 1 summarizes the measurement integrity and regression diagnostic results.

Table 1: Summary of Reliability, Factor Analysis, and Regression Diagnostic Tests

Test/Statistic	Variable/Component	Value	Criterion
Reliability	Reactive Maintenance (11 items)	$\alpha = 0.884$	> 0.70
Reliability	Management Support (9 items)	$\alpha = 0.771$	> 0.70
Reliability	Employee Job Performance (10 items)	$\alpha = 0.762$	> 0.70
Factor Analysis	Reactive Maintenance	KMO = 0.848	> 0.50
Factor Analysis	Reactive Maintenance	Bartlett $\chi^2 = 2524.147$, df = 55, $p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
Factor Analysis	Employee Job Performance	KMO = 0.548	> 0.50
Factor Analysis	Employee Job Performance	Bartlett $\chi^2 = 1562.645$, df = 45, $p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$



Multicollinearity	Reactive Maintenance	Tolerance = 0.884; VIF = 1.132	VIF < 5.00
Homogeneity of Variance	Reactive Maintenance	Levene $F(37, 273) = 1.899, p = 0.152$	$p > 0.05$
Homogeneity of Variance	Management Support	Levene $F(37, 273) = 1.637, p = 0.121$	$p > 0.05$
Autocorrelation	Full regression model	Durbin–Watson = 1.530	1.5 – 2.5
Normality	Standardized residuals	P–P plot aligned with diagonal	Visual fit
Linearity	All predictors	Partial regression plots linear	Linear pattern

Note. $N = 323$. KMO = Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin; VIF = variance inflation factor.

All three study constructs exhibited acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.884 for reactive maintenance, 0.771 for management support, and 0.762 for employee job performance. Exploratory factor analysis supported the dimensional structure of the scales, evidenced by Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin values of 0.848 for reactive maintenance and 0.548 for employee job performance, together with significant Bartlett's tests of sphericity. Multicollinearity was not a concern, as the variance inflation factor for reactive maintenance was 1.132, well below the critical threshold of 5. Levene's tests for both reactive maintenance and management support yielded non-significant results, confirming homogeneity of variance. The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.530 indicated no autocorrelation, while the normal probability plot showed residuals closely following the diagonal, satisfying normality. Partial regression plots further confirmed linear relationships for all predictor variables. Hence, these diagnostics establish that the data satisfied the requisite parametric assumptions and that the measurement instruments were reliable and structurally valid for inferential analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Prior to hypothesis testing, the means of the study variables were examined to characterize the prevailing levels of reactive maintenance, management support, and employee job performance among maintenance staff in the sampled five-star hotels. Composite means represent the average of item means; standard deviations estimated from item-level variances and internal consistency reliabilities as presented in Table 2



Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	N	M	SD
Reactive Maintenance	323	3.46	0.58
Management Support	323	3.98	0.48
Employee Job Performance	323	4.00	0.44

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. All items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Always*).

Table 2 indicates that respondents reported moderate levels of reactive maintenance ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.58$), suggesting that unplanned repairs and breakdown-driven maintenance activities occurred with moderate frequency within the surveyed hotels. Management support recorded a relatively high mean ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.48$), indicating that respondents generally perceived supervisors to provide adequate guidance, resources, and operational support. Employee job performance had the highest mean ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.44$), implying that maintenance employees perceived themselves as consistently demonstrating high levels of task performance, adaptability, and proactive work behaviours.

Correlation Analysis of the Variables

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PMCC) method was applied to assess the bivariate relationships, allowing the determination of the strength and direction of linear associations between variables. Table 3 presents the bivariate correlations among the study variables.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

		EJP	REA	MS
Employee job performance (EJP)	Pearson Correlation	1		
Reactive maintenance (REA)	Pearson Correlation	-.566**	1	
Management support (MS)	Pearson Correlation	.483**	-.544**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=323



Reactive maintenance exhibited a significant negative association with employee job performance ($r = -.566, p < .01$), indicating that higher levels of breakdown-driven, unplanned repair work corresponded with lower self-reported performance among maintenance staff. Conversely, management support demonstrated a significant positive correlation with employee job performance ($r = .483, p < .01$), suggesting that employees who perceived stronger supervisory backing, resource provision, and managerial approachability tended to report higher task proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. Additionally, reactive maintenance and management support were significantly and negatively correlated ($r = -.544, p < .01$), implying that hotels with more intensive reactive maintenance environments tended to offer lower levels of perceived management support. These findings provided preliminary evidence supporting the hypothesized relationships and warranted subsequent regression analyses to determine the direct and moderating effects.

Hypothesis Testing

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the direct effect of reactive maintenance on employee job performance and to determine whether management support moderated this relationship. In the first step, employee job performance was regressed on reactive maintenance. As presented in Table 4, reactive maintenance had a statistically significant negative effect on employee job performance ($B = -0.587, SE = 0.058, \beta = -0.478, t = -10.191, p < .001$). This finding indicates that a one-unit increase in reactive maintenance was associated with a 0.587-unit decrease in employee job performance. The regression model explained 32.0% of the variance in employee job performance ($R^2 = .320$), and the overall model was statistically significant, $F(1, 321) = 103.86, p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that reactive maintenance has no significant effect on employee job performance was rejected.

Table 4: Direct Effect of Reactive Maintenance on Employee Job Performance

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	4.466	0.374		11.938	<.001
Reactive Maintenance	-0.587	0.058	-0.478	-10.191	<.001

Note. $N = 323$. $R^2 = .320, F(1, 321) = 103.86, p < .001$.

In the second step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the predictor variable (reactive maintenance) and the moderator (management support) were mean-centered, after which the interaction term (Reactive Maintenance $\times$ Management Support) was entered into the regression model together with



the main effects to examine the moderating influence of management support.

Table 5: Moderating Effect of Management Support on the Relationship between Reactive Maintenance and Employee Job Performance

Panel A.					
Moderation Model Summary	Value				
R	.641				
R^2	.411				
ΔR^2					
(Interaction)	.047				
$F(3, 319)$	74.28***				
$\Delta F(1, 319)$	25.71***				
Panel B.					
Regression Coefficients	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Constant	3.928	0.024	164.30	<.001	[3.881, 3.975]
Reactive Maintenance (REA)	-0.468	0.064	-7.30	<.001	[-0.594, -0.342]
Management Support (MS)	0.367	0.053	6.95	<.001	[0.263, 0.471]
REA × MS	-0.579	0.114	-5.07	<.001	[-0.803, -0.354]
Panel C.					
Conditional Effects of Reactive Maintenance at Levels of Management Support	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Low MS (-0.65 SD)	-0.094	0.107	-0.88	.380	[-0.303, 0.116]
Mean MS	-0.544	0.063	-8.64	<.001	[-0.668, -0.420]
High MS (+0.46 SD)	-0.737	0.075	-9.83	<.001	[-0.884, -0.589]

Note. $N = 323$. Dependent variable = Employee Job Performance. Predictors were mean-centered prior to creating the interaction term. ΔR^2 represents the additional variance explained by the interaction term. CI = confidence interval. ** $p < .001$.



The moderation model was statistically significant, explaining 41.1% of the variance in employee job performance ($R = .641$, $R^2 = .411$, $F(3, 319) = 74.28$, $p < .001$), as presented in Table 5. Reactive maintenance had a significant negative effect on employee job performance ($B = -0.468$, $SE = 0.064$, $t = -7.30$, $p < .001$), whereas management support had a significant positive effect ($B = 0.367$, $SE = 0.053$, $t = 6.95$, $p < .001$). More importantly, the interaction between reactive maintenance and management support was statistically significant ($B = -0.579$, $SE = 0.114$, $t = -5.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-0.803, -0.354]$). The interaction contributed an additional 4.7% of explained variance beyond the main effects ($\Delta R^2 = .047$, $\Delta F(1, 319) = 25.71$, $p < .001$), confirming a significant moderating effect of management support.

The conditional effects further showed that the relationship between reactive maintenance and employee job performance varied across levels of management support. At low management support, the effect of reactive maintenance was not statistically significant ($B = -0.094$, $p = .380$). However, the negative effect became statistically significant at the mean level of management support ($B = -0.544$, $p < .001$) and was strongest at high management support ($B = -0.737$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that the adverse effect of reactive maintenance on employee job performance became progressively stronger as perceived management support increased. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H04a), which stated that management support has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between reactive maintenance and employee job performance, was rejected.

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction effect, showing that the slope representing the relationship between reactive maintenance and employee job performance becomes increasingly negative at higher levels of management support, thereby confirming the presence of a statistically significant moderating effect.

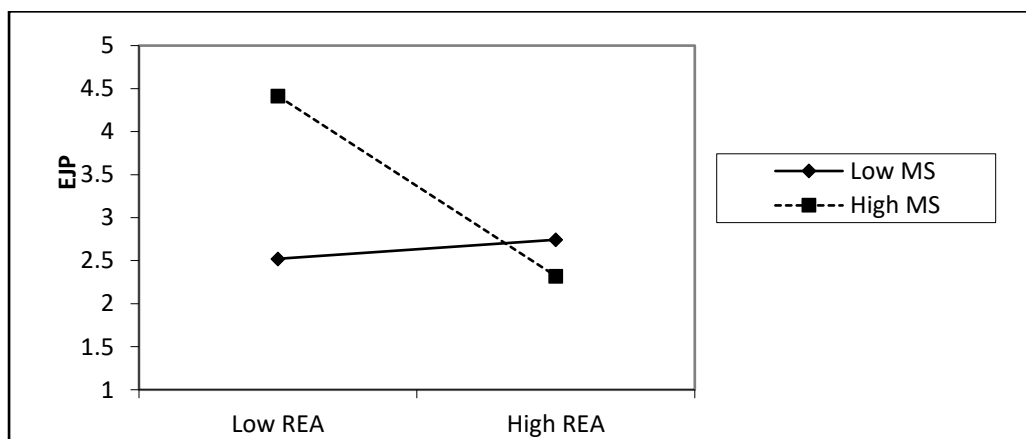


Figure 1: Interaction of Reactive Maintenance and Management Support on Employee Job Performance



Qualitative results

The findings indicate that while reactive maintenance helps restore operations following equipment failures, frequent breakdowns can disrupt workflow, increase employee workload, and negatively affect service delivery. However, the hotels mitigate these effects through contingency measures such as backup systems, flexible work schedules, and adaptive operational practices, enabling employees to maintain service continuity. Reactive maintenance supports operational continuity, reducing reliance on corrective maintenance through more proactive maintenance practices is likely to enhance employee job performance and operational efficiency.

"Having well-maintained systems such as elevators, air conditioning units, kitchen appliances, laundry machines, and IT networks ensures smooth daily operations. This stability minimizes unexpected breakdowns, thereby reducing employee stress levels. As a result, staff can dedicate more energy and attention to delivering excellent guest services rather than dealing with technical disruptions" (MM1)

"Employee performance improves significantly when downtime is minimized. Continuous equipment functionality allows employees to complete their duties efficiently, without the frustration or delays that come with system failures" (MM2)

"Consistent performance of equipment reduces guest complaints, which in turn boosts employee confidence. When workers are not frequently confronted with dissatisfied guests, their morale improves, leading to higher productivity and better service delivery" (MM3)

"That stable systems enable employees to maintain focus on their core tasks mainly customer service without being distracted by operational challenges. When the working environment is predictable and reliable, employees experience less frustration and demonstrate greater productivity" (MM4)

"An effective maintenance management approach supports employees in upholding high service standards. By minimizing system-related stressors, staff remain calm and



efficient, which enhances both their individual performance and overall service quality” (MM5)

“Smooth operations foster a sense of confidence among employees. When they are assured that equipment will function properly, they perform tasks more efficiently and provide consistent, high-quality service” (MM6)

“Employees can work without the constant anxiety of sudden equipment failures. Reduced uncertainty boosts operational efficiency and allows employees to concentrate on achieving performance targets” (MM7)

“Proper maintenance ensures that employees consistently meet set service standards. Stable operations improve staff morale and encourage a positive work attitude, which contributes to better overall performance” (MM8)

“An efficient maintenance system minimizes staff pressure and creates a more supportive work environment. When systems run smoothly, employees can deliver services more effectively and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction” (MM9)

The interview findings indicate that reactive maintenance influences employee job performance by affecting operational continuity. Managers noted that equipment breakdowns can interrupt workflow, increase employee workload, and create stress, thereby reducing efficiency and service quality. However, they also emphasized that prompt corrective maintenance minimizes downtime, restores normal operations quickly, and enables employees to resume their duties with minimal disruption. The findings suggest that although reactive maintenance may temporarily disrupt operations, timely and efficient corrective actions mitigate its negative effects and support employee performance.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that reactive maintenance exerts a significant negative direct effect on employee job performance among maintenance staff in Nairobi's five-star hotels, confirming that breakdown-driven operational strategies undermine workforce effectiveness beyond their documented technical and financial costs. The observed negative coefficient aligns with Lai and Yik's (2012) finding that corrective maintenance dominates



hotel engineering work orders and fragments technician efficiency, particularly in trades such as air-conditioning where unplanned demands are most volatile. It also corroborates industry benchmarking data indicating that properties with reactive maintenance ratios exceeding 47% report markedly lower staff efficiency compared to organizations with structured preventive systems (ServiceChannel, 2026). In the Kenyan context, Were and Maranga (2022) established that aggregated maintenance practices significantly predicted employee performance, yet by isolating the reactive component, the present study clarifies that breakdown-driven approaches are a primary driver of this relationship. The prevalence of reactive maintenance in Kenyan hotels where 73.3% of establishments lack organizational master planners and only 10% maintain designated maintenance departments creates conditions where maintenance staff operate in perpetual firefighting mode, depleting the cognitive and emotional resources necessary for sustained high performance (Makomere, 2014). This interpretation is reinforced by Maintenance Management Theory, which positions reactive maintenance as the least efficient and most disruptive form of maintenance, often leading to unplanned stoppages and emergency responses that introduce instability into the work environment (Mobley, 2002; Moubray, 1997; Liao, 2006). The qualitative interviews with maintenance managers further illuminate this mechanism; managers consistently noted that well-maintained systems minimize unexpected breakdowns, reduce employee stress, and allow staff to dedicate energy toward delivering excellent guest services rather than managing technical disruptions. As one manager observed, employees can work without the constant anxiety of sudden equipment failures when systems are stable, which boosts operational efficiency and allows concentration on performance targets. Conversely, when reactive maintenance predominates, employees experience interruptions, delays, and operational pressure that affect their ability to be proficient, adaptive, and proactive, consistent with Griffin et al.'s (2007) Work Role Performance Model. Empirical literature supports this negative association, with studies noting that high reliance on reactive maintenance creates inconsistent workflows, reduces employee morale, and results in lower productivity (Muchiri et al., 2014; Alsayouf, 2007). In hospitality settings specifically, unplanned maintenance negatively affects service staff efficiency and guest satisfaction because unexpected equipment failures force employees to improvise, rush tasks, or manage guest complaints, ultimately lowering service quality and limiting employees' ability to perform effectively. The strong negative coefficient found in this study therefore aligns with broader evidence from Ntshebe et al. (2022) showing that reactive maintenance practices increase operational strain and reduce employee efficiency, while Tsang (2002) highlighted that



although some contingency mechanisms may exist, excessive reliance on reactive strategies creates instability that undermines staff performance.

The second and more consequential finding concerns the moderating role of management support. Contrary to the buffering hypothesis derived from Organizational Support Theory and the broader job demands-resources literature, management support did not attenuate the negative relationship between reactive maintenance and performance; rather, it amplified it. This counterintuitive pattern challenges the prevailing empirical consensus, exemplified by Nawaz and Ansari (2017) and Yunus et al. (2023), that perceived organizational and managerial support invariably moderates stress-outcome relationships by replenishing depleted resources or transforming demands into manageable challenges. The conditional effects reveal that at low levels of management support, the association between reactive maintenance and performance was negligible and non-significant, whereas at high levels of support, the negative effect intensified dramatically. This suggests that employees operating under chronically low-support conditions may develop a form of resigned adaptation to breakdown-driven environments, lowering their expectations and adjusting their performance standards to match the absence of structural backing. Conversely, in high-support managerial contexts, the same reactive maintenance practices generate acute performance erosion because they violate the psychological contract implicitly established through supportive leadership. When managers communicate organizational goals, provide feedback, allocate resources, and encourage initiative as captured in the high scores for management approachability and encouragement in this sample employees develop expectations of operational predictability, adequate tooling, and structured workflows (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Reactive maintenance fundamentally contradicts these expectations; the sudden equipment failures, improvised repairs, and schedule disruptions that characterize breakdown-driven strategies create a stark misalignment between the supportive managerial rhetoric and the chaotic operational reality. This misalignment is particularly damaging in five-star hotels, where service excellence depends on seamless physical infrastructure and where maintenance staff are acutely aware that emergency repairs directly compromise guest satisfaction and brand reputation. The amplification effect thus reflects not a failure of support per se, but an incompatibility between supportive leadership philosophies and reactive operational systems a phenomenon that prior hospitality research has not documented because it has treated maintenance strategy and leadership support as independent rather than interacting determinants of employee outcomes.



Conclusion

This study examined the effect of reactive maintenance practices on employee job performance among maintenance staff in five-star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya, with management support as a moderating variable. The findings confirm that reactive maintenance exerts a significant negative direct effect on employee job performance, and more critically, that management support amplifies rather than buffers this adverse association. These results demonstrate that breakdown-driven operational strategies undermine workforce effectiveness beyond their technical costs, and that investments in managerial support yield counterproductive returns when paired with chronically reactive maintenance systems. For Nairobi's luxury hospitality sector and comparable emerging markets, the evidence underscores that sustainable workforce performance depends on aligning operational infrastructure with human resource commitments, transitioning from breakdown-driven firefighting to structured preventive systems rather than relying on supervisory support alone to mitigate operational chaos.

Implications for Theory, Policy, Practice and Future Research

Implications for Theory

The study advances theoretical understanding through the lenses of Organizational Support Theory and the Conservation of Resources framework. The finding that management support amplifies rather than buffers the negative relationship between reactive maintenance and employee job performance challenges the universal buffering hypothesis embedded in Organizational Support Theory, which posits that perceived organizational commitment from supervisory representatives invariably motivates reciprocation through enhanced effort and performance. Rather than assuming that support always mitigates demand effects, the results indicate that support becomes detrimental when it creates normative expectations that the organizational infrastructure cannot fulfill. Similarly, from a Conservation of Resources perspective, the findings suggest that management support functions as a resource that, when paired with chronically depleting reactive maintenance demands, accelerates rather than slows resource loss because employees experience acute misalignment between expected and actual working conditions. The study extends these theories into the hospitality maintenance domain by positioning maintenance strategy as a structural contingency that determines whether supportive leadership translates into motivational gains or psychological contract



breaches, offering a more nuanced account of how infrastructural decisions cascade into workforce outcomes.

Implications for Policy

For policymakers in Kenya's hospitality sector, the findings reveal a regulatory blind spot where five-star classification criteria emphasize visible service amenities while overlooking the operational infrastructure that sustains service delivery. The Tourism Regulatory Authority should incorporate maintenance management audits into hotel rating and licensing processes, requiring evidence of preventive maintenance planning, designated maintenance departments, equipment reliability metrics, and structured maintenance schedules with clear operational procedures. Furthermore, occupational health and safety guidelines for hospitality maintenance workers should explicitly address the psychosocial hazards of breakdown-driven work environments, including unpredictable workloads, extended hours, and chronic emergency demands, ensuring that labor protections align with the operational realities of luxury service delivery.

Implications for Practice

Hotel managers face a clear imperative: investments in management support yield diminishing or negative returns when maintenance infrastructure remains chronically reactive. Practically, reactive maintenance should be limited to emergency situations and supported by contingency plans, backup systems, and rapid-response protocols to minimize negative impacts on staff performance. Hotels should strengthen management support through effective leadership, tangible resource provision, and genuine employee engagement, while simultaneously investing in employee training on maintenance technologies, adaptive problem-solving, and operational flexibility. Integrating maintenance outcomes into employee performance management systems can further promote accountability, continuous improvement, and collaboration between operational and maintenance teams. Where immediate transitions to preventive systems are financially infeasible, managers must recalibrate their supportive communications to explicitly acknowledge operational constraints, thereby narrowing the expectation-reality gap that drives performance erosion. Ultimately, enhancing employee job performance, service quality, operational efficiency, and the competitiveness of five-star hotels depends on aligning leadership investments with structural operational improvements.

Implications for Future Research

Future studies should employ objective performance metrics such as first-time fix rates, guest complaint resolution times, and supervisory ratings to



complement self-reported data. Qualitative phenomenological inquiry would illuminate the cognitive and emotional mechanisms underlying resigned adaptation in low-support environments and psychological contract breach in high-support contexts. Comparative research across hotel tiers, geographic markets, and cultural settings would test the generalizability of the amplification effect, while intervention studies manipulating maintenance strategy transitions would provide causal evidence for the theoretical propositions advanced here. Multi-level research incorporating hotel-level maintenance expenditure and industry benchmarking metrics would further disentangle individual perceptual effects from organizational structural effects.

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