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IMPROVING PEOPLE MANAGEMENT IN OTOP ENTERPRISES THROUGH BASIC HRM TRAINING

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Abstract

Purpose: To examine basic human resource management (HRM) training, adoption of people management practices, and short-term worker and enterprise outcomes in Thai One Tambon One Product (OTOP) enterprises.

Research Methodology: The study reports an enterprise-level cluster-randomized intervention involving 48 enterprises and 583 workers. Training comprised 16 hours over two weeks, followed by coaching. Surveys, enterprise records, and interviews informed baseline and three-month comparisons; the reported analysis used mixed-effects models.

Results: At follow-up, adoption of written job descriptions was 68% in treatment enterprises and 19% in controls; structured feedback adoption was 61% and 17%, respectively. Job satisfaction increased from 3.2 to 3.9 in the treatment group and from 3.3 to 3.4 in controls. Reported productivity growth was 17.8% versus 5.2%. Interviews described clearer responsibilities and appreciation of recognition, alongside reluctance to use formal grievance channels.

Limitations: Three-month observation limits conclusions about persistence. Retention intentions are distinct from actual retention. Cross-sector productivity aggregation, incomplete measurement documentation, and unavailable full model outputs limit interpretation.

Contribution: The study examines the implementation of basic HRM practices in resource-constrained community enterprises and identifies practical issues for adapting people management support to local working relationships.

Keywords: *Human resource management; OTOP enterprises; management training; practice adoption; worker outcomes; enterprise performance*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) movement has emerged as a model of grassroots entrepreneurship and community development in Thailand. Inspired by Japan's One Village One Product (OVOP) movement, OTOP promotes locally distinctive products and creates opportunities to market community output. Natsuda et al. (2012) examine this policy transfer and its implications for rural development. The relevance of OTOP therefore extends beyond individual products to the organization of community-based economic activity.

OTOP enterprises include producers of textiles, handicrafts, and food products, which are also represented in the present study. Their commercial activities combine local knowledge with the practical requirements of production and market participation. Recent village-level evidence associates OTOP participation with higher household income, while indicating that outcomes vary with local conditions (Nagashima & Kato, 2025). That evidence concerns the overall program; it does not establish which internal people management practices improve enterprise performance.

Despite the importance of production and marketing support, the management of people within small enterprises requires separate attention. Many owner-managers coordinate work directly without a dedicated HR department. Resource constraints and informal employment relationships can shape the adoption of professional HRM practices, as illustrated by de Kok et al. (2006). In the OTOP context, the practical question is whether a limited set of understandable management tools can be integrated into everyday work without imposing an excessive administrative burden.

Unlike corporations with specialized HR departments, community enterprises may rely on family members, neighbors, and part-time workers. These relationships can support cooperation but can also make role allocation, performance feedback, and complaints sensitive matters. Harney and Alkhalaf (2021) identify limited attention to SME diversity and contextual conditions within the HRM literature. Accordingly, applying practices developed for larger organizations requires examination of their suitability for the particular enterprise setting.

A further distinction is needed between receiving management training and implementing the practices introduced. Evidence from small-business training studies indicates that effects are not uniform across programs and outcomes (McKenzie, 2021). Attendance alone therefore does not demonstrate a change in people management. The present intervention focuses on observable tools: written job descriptions, task or key performance indicator (KPI) boards, structured feedback sessions, recognition or reward logs, and grievance channels. These tools provide a practical basis for examining what managers adopt after training.

The research problem is the connection between basic HRM training, the adoption of these workplace practices, and short-term worker and enterprise outcomes in OTOP enterprises. The study addresses this problem through treatment–control comparisons and qualitative accounts of implementation. Its intended contribution lies in examining both organizational practice adoption and workers' experiences, rather than treating enterprise performance as the sole indication of training value. The analysis also considers uneven uptake across practices, particularly where formal procedures intersect with established interpersonal relationships.

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The study asks whether training enterprises display higher adoption of basic HRM practices, whether worker outcomes improve relative to controls, and whether the reported enterprise outcomes move in a corresponding direction over three months. It also asks what implementation barriers participants describe. These questions keep the article within human resource management and small-enterprise research. The following sections develop the theoretical framework, describe the reported intervention and measurement approach, present the findings, and discuss their implications and limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Human resource management in small and community enterprises

Human resource management concerns the organization of people-related activities to support work and organizational objectives. The functions relevant to the present intervention include role allocation, feedback, recognition, retention, and communication. The central issue is not whether a small enterprise reproduces the HR department of a large company, but whether its management arrangements help workers understand responsibilities and participate effectively. Professionalization can involve a small number of explicit routines rather than a comprehensive bureaucratic system.

In a study of approximately 700 small and medium-sized firms, de Kok et al. (2006) examine how family ownership and management relate to the use of professional HRM practices. Their findings make ownership and organizational characteristics relevant to the interpretation of formalization. For community enterprises, close personal relationships should consequently be treated as part of the implementation context. They cannot simply be assumed to substitute for clear work responsibilities, nor should informality automatically be equated with managerial failure.

The five tools examined here address different management functions. Written job descriptions clarify responsibilities; task boards make work allocation visible; structured feedback supports discussion of progress; recognition logs document acknowledgment; and grievance channels create an avenue for raising concerns. Their inclusion in one training package does not mean that they have identical adoption requirements. A written description can be prepared by a manager, whereas a usable complaints channel also depends on workers' willingness to communicate concerns. The study therefore reports each practice separately.

Resource limitations also require attention to implementation costs. Sels et al. (2006) examine both value-creating and cost-increasing aspects of small-business HRM. This provides a reason to distinguish improved work coordination from profitability. Maintaining records, conducting feedback meetings, and resolving complaints require time, even if they involve little direct expenditure. In the present study, participants'

accounts of administrative workload are relevant to this trade-off, while the absence of cost data prevents a formal assessment of net returns.

2.2 Theoretical mechanisms linking practices and outcomes

The resource-based view provides a firm-level rationale for examining how people are organized and supported. Barney (1991) links sustained competitive advantage to the characteristics of firm resources. In this study, the relevant implication is that managerial routines may help enterprises make better use of workers' skills and experience. Basic HRM tools are not necessarily rare or difficult to imitate, however. Short-term productivity differences alone cannot demonstrate sustained competitive advantage or establish all conditions required by the resource-based view.

At the worker level, self-determination theory emphasizes competence, autonomy, and relatedness as psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Clearer guidance and constructive feedback may help workers understand and perform their tasks, while recognition may support a sense of being valued. These mechanisms offer an interpretation of participant accounts; the present data do not include a direct test of psychological need satisfaction. It is therefore necessary to distinguish theory-informed explanation from an empirically established mediating pathway.

Employee voice adds a further boundary condition. Morrison (2023) reviews the processes through which employees express or withhold work-related concerns. Applied to the present intervention, this perspective suggests that introducing a formal grievance procedure does not ensure its use. Workers may still consider speaking up socially costly or ineffective. The lower adoption of grievance channels is therefore examined alongside participants' accounts of deference and interpersonal harmony, without attributing a fixed cultural trait to all Thai workers or enterprises.

These perspectives operate at different levels. The resource-based view motivates attention to enterprise routines; self-determination theory informs the interpretation of worker experiences; and voice research helps explain the difficulty of using formal communication channels. The study does not combine them into an untested causal model. Instead, they define a focused explanatory sequence in which training may support practice adoption, followed by possible changes in working experiences and operational outcomes. Establishing mediation would require additional analysis and suitable temporal measurement.

2.3 Prior evidence and research expectations

Evidence on management interventions provides a rationale for evaluation while also limiting direct extrapolation. Bloom et al. (2013) report that a management intervention improved productivity in Indian textile firms. Those firms and the intervention differ from small OTOP enterprises, so the study provides evidence of managerial relevance rather than an expected effect size for this setting. McKenzie and

Woodruff (2017) examine business practices in small firms across several developing countries, supporting the value of measuring specific practices instead of relying solely on broad managerial labels.

McKenzie (2021) reassesses the evidence on small-business training and cautions against treating the earlier absence of statistically detectable effects as a universal conclusion that training is ineffective. Taken with the contextual variation emphasized in SME research, this suggests examining implementation and outcomes separately. The present article therefore gives priority to practice adoption and reports worker and enterprise indicators as distinct outcomes. Revenue growth and customer satisfaction remain supplementary evidence because their measurement is less fully documented.

The expectations below organize the analysis in this revised article. They are not presented as preregistered hypotheses, and their inclusion does not imply that the study had a prospectively registered analysis plan. No formal hypothesis decision is assigned where the complete statistical output is unavailable.

H1: Enterprises receiving basic HRM training exhibit higher adoption of the five HRM practices at the three-month follow-up than control enterprises.

H2: Workers in training enterprises exhibit more favorable changes in job satisfaction, affective commitment, absenteeism, and intentions to leave than workers in control enterprises.

H3: Training enterprises exhibit more favorable short-term changes in productivity and product quality than control enterprises.

The qualitative component considers how participants describe role clarity, recognition, communication, and implementation barriers. These accounts can help explain why some practices appear easier to adopt than others. They do not independently establish the size of the intervention effect, and they cannot determine whether an individual HRM tool caused a particular outcome. Because the program delivered several tools together, any treatment comparison concerns the package rather than the isolated effect of one component.

METHOD

3.1 Research design and setting

This study employed a cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) to evaluate the impact of basic human resource management (HRM) training on people management practices and enterprise performance within One Tambon One Product (OTOP) enterprises. Clusters were defined at the enterprise level to avoid contamination among workers within the same group. Enterprises were randomly assigned to either the treatment group, which received HRM training immediately, or the control group, which

continued business as usual and were scheduled to receive training after the study concluded.

The study covered three rural districts and enterprises in food processing, textiles and weaving, and handicrafts. Eligible enterprises had at least eight active workers, had operated continuously for at least twelve months, and were willing to participate in training and data collection. A total of 48 enterprises and 583 workers were included at baseline. Within each enterprise, available workers and supervisors were surveyed. Enterprise participation and individual worker participation represent separate levels of the sampling structure.

The enterprise was the allocation unit because the intervention concerned shared workplace practices. Workers within an enterprise could therefore experience the same management arrangements. The study's effective information for treatment comparisons depends on the number of enterprises and within-enterprise similarity, not only on the total number of workers. This distinction is relevant when interpreting worker-level results and the precision of the reported estimates.

3.2 Intervention

The intervention consisted of a basic HRM training program delivered over two weeks, totaling 16 hours. The program was designed to be practical, low-cost, and directly applicable to the OTOP context. Training modules included: (1) recruitment and role clarity, (2) motivation and retention, (3) performance management, and (4) communication, conflict resolution, and workplace safety. Sessions were interactive, combining short lectures, group discussions, and role-plays. Each enterprise appointed an "HRM Champion" to support adoption of practices introduced during training. Trainers conducted follow-up coaching visits three weeks after the training to monitor implementation and address challenges.

The intervention translated these modules into five workplace tools: written job descriptions, task or KPI boards, structured feedback sessions, recognition or reward logs, and grievance or complaint channels. Recruitment and role clarity were addressed through descriptions of responsibilities; motivation and performance management were supported through feedback and recognition; and communication was supported through opportunities to raise concerns. The training and subsequent coaching constituted one intervention package. The available results do not isolate the contribution of the classroom sessions from coaching or the HRM Champion arrangement.

Practical implementation is important because a tool may be introduced without becoming part of everyday work. The adoption outcomes therefore concern the reported use of each tool at follow-up, rather than simply whether its content was presented during training. The original study describes the program as practical and

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low-cost, but no intervention costing or cost-effectiveness analysis is available. Those descriptions should be interpreted as design intentions rather than demonstrated economic findings.

3.3 Outcomes and measurement

The original study specification identified labor productivity, worker retention, and adoption of HRM practices as primary outcomes. Secondary outcomes included job satisfaction, organizational commitment, absenteeism, and perceived fairness of supervision. The reported findings are most complete for practice adoption, satisfaction, commitment, absenteeism, and intentions to leave. Actual worker retention and supervisory fairness are not presented as confirmed outcomes in this article because corresponding results are not available.

Practice adoption was assessed for the five tools individually, and the manuscript reports an HRM adoption index on a 0–100 scale. Job satisfaction was reported on a five-point scale. Affective commitment was illustrated by an item concerning pride in working for the enterprise. Absenteeism was reported as days missed during the preceding 30 days, while intentions to leave concerned the following six months. The sources, item wording, scoring rules, translation procedures, and reliability estimates for the survey instruments require documentation before measurement validity can be assessed.

Productivity requires particular care. The original method described defect-adjusted output per worker-hour, whereas the results report sector-specific output per worker per week and an aggregate percentage change. These measures are not interchangeable. The sector-specific figures are retained in their reported units, and the aggregate growth figure is presented separately. Without the underlying output, labor-hour, defect, and weighting records, the aggregate cannot be reconstructed from the available sector examples.

Customer satisfaction was described as an informal survey of repeat buyers, and monthly revenue change was reported by enterprises. These indicators are treated as exploratory because the customer sample, instrument, revenue verification, and coverage of records are not sufficiently detailed. Product defect rates are reported separately from productivity to avoid implying that the published output figures have already been adjusted for defective production.

The original method identifies baseline (T0), an immediate post-training assessment (T1), and a three-month follow-up (T2). The available quantitative results mainly compare T0 and T2. No T1 estimates are inferred from the reported follow-up values. The distinction between immediate learning and later workplace implementation therefore remains important when interpreting the study.

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3.4 Data collection and analysis

Surveys were administered in person using digital tablets, with confidentiality ensured during individual interviews. Enterprise production and attendance records were collected where available. The primary analysis followed an intention-to-treat (ITT) approach, using mixed-effects models with enterprise-level random intercepts to account for clustering. Baseline covariates and stratification variables were included to improve precision. Missing data were addressed using multiple imputation under the assumption of missing at random.

Enterprise adoption indicators and enterprise performance are interpreted at the enterprise level, while satisfaction, commitment, absenteeism, and intentions concern workers nested within enterprises. The available adjusted estimate for job satisfaction is reported as such. Other displayed changes are descriptive summaries unless the corresponding model output is available. A difference between two reported percentages is expressed in percentage points and is not automatically an adjusted treatment effect.

Interviews provide supplementary accounts from workers and managers. The findings below retain the quotations and implementation observations provided in the original manuscript. They are used to illustrate perceived role clarity, recognition, coordination, and reluctance to raise complaints. The available material does not document the number of interviewees, interview language, recording and translation procedures, or coding process; consequently, no claim of thematic saturation or independently validated qualitative coding is made.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent was secured from enterprise leaders and individual participants. Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage. To ensure fairness, control enterprises were offered the same HRM training after data collection was completed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. RESULTS

4.1 Participant coverage and baseline context

A total of 48 OTOP enterprises across three rural districts were enrolled in the study, representing diverse sectors including food processing (42%), textiles and weaving (31%), and handicrafts such as wood carving or herbal product packaging (27%). Within these enterprises, 583 individual workers participated in the baseline survey, with an average of 12 respondents per enterprise. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 56% women and 44% men, though women were more heavily

represented in textile enterprises. The average age of participants was 37 years (SD = 11.4), reflecting the mix of younger workers seeking supplementary income and older artisans maintaining traditional practices.

At three months, 45 of 48 enterprises (93.8%) and 529 of 583 workers (90.7%) remained in the follow-up sample. The original account attributed losses to seasonal migration, family obligations, and illness. These figures describe follow-up participation, not employment retention. Group-specific losses are needed to assess differential attrition, so the overall follow-up rates should not be interpreted as evidence that attrition bias was absent.

At baseline, both treatment and control enterprises demonstrated limited formal HRM practices. Fewer than 15% of enterprises reported having written job descriptions, and only 10% conducted regular performance evaluations. Recruitment was overwhelmingly informal, typically relying on family ties or community networks. Workers reported moderate job satisfaction (M = 3.2 on a five-point scale), but relatively high turnover intentions, with 28% indicating that they were likely to seek alternative employment in the next six months.

These baseline observations indicate limited formalization of the practices addressed by the intervention. They provide context for adoption at follow-up, but an overall baseline description is not a substitute for a treatment–control characteristics table. The available material does not establish equivalence between groups on all relevant observed or unobserved characteristics. Interpretation therefore depends on the documented allocation procedure and the adequacy of the reported analysis.

4.2 Adoption of HRM practices

At the three-month follow-up, reported adoption was higher in treatment enterprises for each of the five practices. Table 1 preserves the original percentages and percentage-point differences. Written job descriptions showed the largest absolute difference, followed by structured feedback and task boards. Grievance channels had the lowest reported treatment-group adoption, indicating that uptake was uneven across the intervention components.

Table 1. Adoption of HRM practices at the three-month follow-up

HRM practice	Treatment (%)	Control (%)	Difference (pp)
Written job descriptions	68	19	+49
Task or KPI boards	54	12	+42
Structured feedback sessions	61	17	+44
Recognition or reward logs	47	11	+36
Grievance or complaint channel	33	9	+24

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Source: Authors' reported study data. Note: pp = percentage points. Group-specific denominators require documentation; the differences are unadjusted descriptions.

The manuscript also reports an adoption index of 58.2 (SD = 12.5) for treatment enterprises and 21.3 (SD = 9.7) for controls, with $p < .001$. These values are retained as separately reported index results. Their scoring cannot be established from Table 1 alone: a simple mean of the five displayed percentages is 52.6% for treatment and 13.6% for control. The index should therefore not be interpreted as the unweighted average of the displayed adoption percentages unless the underlying scoring and denominators reconcile the difference.



Figure 1. Photographs of training sessions
Source: Authors' documentation.

Qualitative interviews reinforced these quantitative results. Workers frequently reported that having clearer role expectations reduced misunderstandings and improved teamwork. For instance, one worker in a weaving enterprise explained, "Before, we were just told to help with weaving, but I never knew exactly which tasks I was responsible for. Now I have a sheet with my role, and it makes me feel more confident."

Managers also emphasized that task boards helped visualize progress and made it easier to monitor daily operations. However, some enterprises encountered difficulties sustaining certain practices, particularly grievance mechanisms. Workers often felt hesitant to use formal complaint systems, citing cultural norms of deference and a reluctance to create interpersonal conflict.

These accounts suggest that some tools were valued for making expectations explicit, while others required changes in interpersonal communication. They are consistent with H1 in direction, but the reported percentages alone do not establish the precision of the adoption effect. Because each tool was part of the same package, the

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findings also cannot show that written job descriptions were independently more effective than feedback or recognition.

4.3 Worker-level outcomes

Job satisfaction increased from 3.2 at baseline to 3.9 (SD = 0.7) in the treatment group and from 3.3 to 3.4 (SD = 0.6) in controls. The original analysis reports an adjusted mean difference of +0.45 (95% CI [0.28, 0.62], $p < .001$). This adjusted estimate is distinct from the unadjusted comparison of changes and is retained without recalculation. The absence of the full model specification limits independent assessment of the adjustment.

Affective commitment increased from 3.0 to 3.7 in the treatment group and from 3.1 to 3.2 in controls. Average absenteeism during the preceding 30 days decreased from 3.1 to 1.8 days in the treatment group and from 3.0 to 2.7 days in controls. These figures describe favorable changes, but complete uncertainty estimates for these outcomes are not provided. They should not be treated as independently verified statistically significant effects.

Intentions to leave within six months decreased from 28% to 12% in the treatment group and from 28% to 24% in controls. This concerns stated future intentions, not observed employment turnover. The data therefore suggest a change in reported willingness to remain rather than proof that the intervention retained a particular number of workers. Table 2 brings together the worker outcomes without introducing new observations.

Table 2. Reported worker outcomes at baseline and three months

Outcome	Treatment T0	Treatment T2	Control T0	Control T2
Job satisfaction (1–5)	3.2	3.9	3.3	3.4
Affective commitment score	3.0	3.7	3.1	3.2
Absence in previous 30 days (days)	3.1	1.8	3.0	2.7
Intention to leave within six months (%)	28	12	28	24

Note: T0 = baseline; T2 = three-month follow-up. The commitment scale range and group-specific sample sizes were not specified.

Narratives from workers provided rich context for these statistical findings. Many emphasized that receiving recognition, even in non-monetary forms such as verbal praise or being listed on a recognition board, enhanced their sense of value. One male worker in a food processing enterprise remarked, “Before, we only heard when something went wrong. Now the manager thanks us when we finish on time, and it makes me want to do better.”

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Female workers described appreciation of clearer scheduling and greater recognition. In several enterprises, managers reportedly introduced more transparent shift rotation to accommodate household responsibilities. These accounts identify experiences worth examining, but they do not establish a gender-specific treatment effect. No interaction estimate or complete subgroup analysis is available. The qualitative observations are therefore retained without claiming that women benefited more than men.



Figure 2. Human resource excellence
Source: Authors' documentation.

On the other hand, some workers were cautious about grievance systems. While they acknowledged the importance of having a channel to voice concerns, cultural norms of harmony and respect for authority often discouraged formal use. Workers preferred informal resolution through peer discussion or quiet negotiation with supervisors. This underscores the need for ongoing cultural adaptation of HRM tools rather than assuming one- size-fits-all applicability.

The direction of the reported worker changes is consistent with H2. The most explicitly documented inferential result is the job satisfaction estimate, while the remaining indicators provide descriptive support. Recognition and role clarity offer plausible explanations for the pattern, but changes in these mechanisms were not separately modeled. The study cannot determine how much of the reported worker response was attributable to a particular tool, coaching, or other concurrent changes.

4.4 Enterprise-level outcomes

In textile enterprises, reported output increased from 21.4 to 27.6 units per worker per week in the treatment group and from 22.1 to 23.4 in controls. Food processing output increased from 315 to 368 packaged items per week, compared with

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319 to 330 in controls. The manuscript reports aggregate productivity growth of 17.8% for treatment enterprises and 5.2% for controls, with $p < .01$. Sector examples and the aggregate are presented separately because their units and aggregation procedure are not fully documented.

The proportion of defective or returned items decreased among treatment enterprises, particularly in food processing where spoilage and packaging errors are common. Defect rates dropped from 6.4% to 3.1%, compared to a decline from 6.2% to 5.8% in the control group. Managers attributed these improvements to clearer task allocation and feedback systems that allowed errors to be identified and corrected more quickly.

Customer satisfaction, assessed through informal surveys of repeat buyers, increased from 3.5 to 4.2 on a five-point scale in treatment enterprises and from 3.6 to 3.8 in controls. Average monthly revenue growth was reported as 11.3% and 4.1%, respectively. These are exploratory findings. The available account does not provide sufficient detail on customer sampling, revenue records, seasonality, or model uncertainty to establish their causal interpretation or statistical significance.

Table 3. Reported enterprise indicators

Indicator	Treatment	Control
Textile output, units/worker/week	21.4 → 27.6	22.1 → 23.4
Food processing, packaged items/week	315 → 368	319 → 330
Aggregate productivity growth	17.8%	5.2%
Defect rate	6.4% → 3.1%	6.2% → 5.8%
Customer satisfaction (1–5)	3.5 → 4.2	3.6 → 3.8
Monthly revenue growth	11.3%	4.1%

Note: Arrows indicate baseline to follow-up. The food-processing denominator, sector aggregation, record coverage, and uncertainty require verification; customer satisfaction and revenue are exploratory.

Enterprise owners and managers repeatedly emphasized that structured HRM practices made their operations more predictable and less stressful. For example, a food enterprise manager stated, “Before, I never knew who would come to work on time, and I had to do many tasks myself. Now, with clearer roles and recognition, workers take more responsibility, and I can focus on finding new buyers.”

Weaving enterprises, which often rely on intricate teamwork, reported that job descriptions helped reduce conflicts over task division. Managers noted that when workers understood their roles, coordination improved, and output was smoother.

However, not all impacts were uniformly positive. Some managers initially struggled with the additional administrative workload of maintaining feedback logs or recognition systems. A few also noted resistance from older workers who preferred traditional, informal arrangements. Nevertheless, most managers acknowledged that

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the benefits outweighed the costs, particularly when improvements in product quality became visible.

The reported operational changes are consistent with the direction of H3, although the available reporting does not support a complete hypothesis-testing assessment. Improvements in output and quality may reflect better coordination, but productivity is not equivalent to profitability. Revenue changes do not establish profit changes because labor, materials, training, and administrative costs also matter. The results consequently support further examination of operational value rather than a claim of demonstrated financial returns.



Figure 3. OTOP human resources training
Source: Authors' documentation.

B. DISCUSSION

The study's central contribution is the distinction between introducing HRM tools and securing their use in community enterprises. The adoption differences suggest that a practical training package may help formalize selected routines, while the uneven pattern shows that the tools are not adopted automatically as a uniform system. Written job descriptions and feedback appear more readily implemented than grievance channels. This contrast directs attention to how a practice interacts with daily work and established communication relationships.

The worker accounts add an important perspective to the enterprise indicators. Descriptions of clearer tasks and valued recognition suggest that implementation was experienced through ordinary supervisory interactions. Within the theoretical framework, these observations are compatible with motivational explanations, but they are not a direct test of self-determination theory. Their value is to identify mechanisms

for future measurement and to prevent the enterprise-level outcomes from obscuring workers' experiences.

The productivity findings should also be interpreted in relation to the intervention context. Bloom et al. (2013) show the potential relevance of management practices for operational outcomes, but differences in firm scale, implementation intensity, and measurement prevent direct effect-size comparisons. The present findings concern basic HRM in community enterprises rather than a comprehensive management transformation. Establishing which practices are sustained and whether they improve performance over longer periods remains a separate empirical task.

The OTOP setting matters because work relationships are embedded in local communities. The reported hesitation to use formal complaint channels indicates that introducing a procedure may leave underlying communication concerns unresolved. This should not be read as evidence that grievance channels are unnecessary. Rather, the qualitative accounts suggest examining whether workers understand the channel, expect confidentiality, and believe that concerns will receive a fair response. These are implementation questions raised by the findings, not additional outcomes measured in the study.

The resource-based interpretation is correspondingly limited. The results concern short-term changes after training and the organization of existing human resources. They do not show that the practices are rare, inimitable, or sufficient for sustained competitive advantage. The defensible theoretical contribution is contextual: the study illustrates how relatively simple routines may be relevant to people management in resource-constrained enterprises, while showing that their adoption is shaped by administrative and relational conditions.

4.6 Practical implications

For policymakers and community enterprise support organizations, the results identify people management as an area to consider alongside branding, product development, and market access. A practical program can begin with explicit responsibilities, manageable task records, regular feedback, and acknowledgment of contributions. The appropriate balance depends on enterprise capacity. Extending the program should therefore be accompanied by monitoring of actual use, worker experience, and administrative demands rather than attendance counts alone.

For managers, the findings suggest that formalization need not mean adopting extensive paperwork. A short role description or regular feedback discussion may address a specific coordination problem. Recognition arrangements should use transparent criteria and remain understandable to workers. Grievance channels require particular attention to privacy, access, and follow-through. The study does not identify a

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universally optimal format; these are practical implications to be adapted and evaluated in each enterprise.

The qualitative reports of additional workload also indicate the need to assess the cost of maintaining new routines. Simplified templates, peer support, or coaching may be useful, but the present study does not compare these alternatives. Decisions about wider implementation should consider staff time and operational disruption alongside the reported benefits. A program described as low-cost should ultimately be evaluated using actual costs and evidence of sustained use.

4.7 Limitations and future research

The three-month follow-up restricts conclusions about durability, actual worker retention, and long-term enterprise performance. Coverage of three districts and selected sectors also limits generalization beyond the participating enterprises. The combined training, champion, and coaching package does not allow effects to be attributed to individual components. Future follow-up could examine whether practices remain in use after external support ends and whether observed worker intentions correspond to subsequent employment behavior.

Several reporting limitations constrain the present interpretation. Allocation details, group-specific baseline characteristics and attrition, full clustered model outputs, and the sources and properties of the survey instruments are not sufficiently documented. The adoption index requires reconciliation with its component percentages, while cross-sector productivity requires a consistent definition and transparent aggregation. These issues affect the precision and reproducibility of the findings and cannot be resolved through editorial revision alone.

The qualitative component is also limited by incomplete information on informant selection, translation, and analysis. Customer satisfaction and revenue are exploratory, and multiple outcomes raise the possibility of selective emphasis. Stronger future reporting would specify outcome priorities in advance, retain enterprise and worker identifiers for longitudinal analysis, provide a reproducible analysis record, and document the qualitative procedures. Any future mediation or subgroup analysis should be supported by appropriate measurement and a sufficient number of enterprise clusters.

CONCLUSION

The reported findings indicate higher adoption of basic HRM practices in training enterprises and favorable short-term changes in worker and operational outcomes. Written job descriptions and structured feedback were adopted more frequently than formal grievance channels. Participant accounts described clearer responsibilities and appreciation of recognition, while also identifying reluctance to raise complaints and the administrative effort required to maintain new routines.

The study contributes to human resource management and small-enterprise research by examining practical people management tools in the OTOP setting. Its conclusions remain bounded by the short follow-up and incomplete documentation of several measurement and analysis procedures. The findings support further evaluation of context-sensitive HRM support; they do not establish actual retention gains, profitability, mediation, or sustained competitive advantage. Longer observation and reproducible analysis are needed to determine the persistence and magnitude of the reported benefits.

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DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used to assist with language editing. This assistance did not generate participant data, interview quotations, or statistical estimates, and no new empirical analysis was conducted as part of the revision. The authors are responsible for verifying the revised text, references, original data, statistical outputs, and all declarations before submission.

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