

Strengthening Civil Servant Engagement in Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Examines the influence of leadership, employee understanding, and employee motivation on the engagement of Civil Servants (ASN) in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Regional Device Organizations (OPD). The SDGs represent a global agenda to address complex development challenges, and ASN engagement is crucial for their implementation. This study employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques to evaluate the relationships among these variables. The analysis results indicate that leadership and employee understanding have a significant impact on ASN engagement, while employee motivation does not show a significant influence. The measurement model reveals that the indicators of leadership and employee understanding variably contribute to their latent variables, while the indicators of employee motivation are inconsistent in their effects. These findings emphasize the importance of effective leadership and a good understanding of the SDGs in enhancing ASN engagement, as well as highlighting the need for further evaluation of other factors that may influence this engagement. This research contributes both theoretically and practically by providing insights into strategies for enhancing ASN engagement in sustainable development programs.

Keywords: civil servant; sustainable development; strengthening



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Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a global agenda adopted by the member countries of the United Nations (UN) to address various complex and interrelated development challenges. The SDGs consist of 17 primary goals that encompass various aspects, ranging from the eradication of poverty and hunger, improving health and education, to environmental protection and efforts to combat climate change. Achieving the SDGs is not only the responsibility of the central government but also requires active participation from all levels of society, including civil servants (ASN) working in regional apparatus organizations (OPD). In Indonesia, efforts to integrate the SDGs into regional development planning have been made through the Long-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJPD). However, the success of SDG implementation highly depends on the involvement and contributions of personnel in the OPD. Employee engagement in supporting the SDGs can be influenced by various factors, including leadership, understanding of the SDGs, and employee motivation (Wedhana et al., 2025)

Many studies have shown that effective leadership plays a crucial role in fostering employee engagement. Leaders with a clear vision, good communication skills, and the ability to set a good example can enhance employee participation in sustainable development efforts. Moreover, employees' understanding of the importance of the SDGs and their intrinsic motivation to contribute are also key factors that can influence their level of engagement. However, there remains a knowledge gap regarding how these three factors (leadership, employee understanding, and employee motivation) collectively affect employee engagement in supporting the SDGs. Therefore, this research aims to explore the relationship between these three variables and how they contribute to employee engagement, specifically focusing on civil servants (ASN) in the implementation of SDG programs within OPD. This study aims to assess the extent to which leadership influences ASN engagement in supporting the SDGs, measure the level of ASN understanding of the SDGs and its impact on their engagement, and analyze the influence of employee motivation on their engagement in achieving the SDG goals. Additionally, this research also aims to explain the relationship between leadership, employee understanding, and employee motivation in relation to employee engagement in supporting the SDGs (Hanani et al., 2025)

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the importance of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve common goals. Leaders with a clear vision and effective communication skills can enhance commitment and employee participation. Furthermore, organizational learning theory highlights that a deep understanding of organizational goals and strategies can improve employee engagement and performance. Employees who understand the importance of the SDGs are more likely to actively contribute to achieving these goals. Motivation theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play significant roles in determining the extent of employee engagement in their work. High motivation will encourage employees to work harder and smarter in support of organizational goals. Employee engagement theory suggests that employees who feel engaged and motivated in their work will demonstrate better performance and greater contributions to organizational objectives (Winoto, 2025).

In practice, effective leaders can create a supportive and inspiring work environment, which in turn enhances employee engagement. Good leadership also helps align organizational goals with individual employee objectives. A solid understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can encourage employees to actively participate in programs that support the achievement of these goals. Training and education on the SDGs are essential to ensure that employees have adequate knowledge. Employee motivation can be enhanced through various means, including incentives, recognition, and career development opportunities. High motivation will encourage employees to contribute more towards achieving the SDGs. High employee engagement is closely related to increased productivity and work quality. Organizations that successfully engage their employees in efforts to achieve the SDGs are more likely to attain long-term success (Shalsabella, 2025).

This research is expected to make significant contributions in several aspects, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study will add to the literature on the factors influencing employee engagement in supporting the SDGs, particularly in the context of local government. Practically, the results of this research can provide recommendations for leaders in regional organizations in developing effective strategies to enhance civil servant engagement in sustainable development programs. Furthermore, this study may also offer insights for policymakers to design more effective policies to support the implementation of the SDGs through improved leadership, understanding, and employee motivation. This research will be conducted in several regional organizations involved in planning and implementing sustainable development programs in the area. Data will be collected through a questionnaire designed to measure leadership, employee understanding of the SDGs, employee motivation, and employee engagement in supporting the SDGs. Data analysis will be conducted using quantitative statistical techniques to explore the relationships between the studied variables. By understanding how leadership, employee understanding, and employee motivation interact and influence employee engagement in supporting the SDGs, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of SDG implementation at the regional level.

Literature Review

The Concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, are a comprehensive global agenda aimed at addressing the most pressing challenges facing the world today. These 17 interlinked goals encompass a range of objectives, including gender equality, climate action, poverty alleviation, zero hunger, and quality education. The aim of the SDGs is to create a more just and prosperous world by 2030 by balancing economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability (Adikusuma, 2020; De Silva Lokuwaduge et al., 2022; Koprina, 2020). The eradication of poverty, enhancement of socio-economic inclusion, and environmental protection are the objectives of the SDGs (United Nations, 1992). As a global to-do list for sustainable development, the SDGs have often been criticized for being overly broad, excessively ambitious, and potentially causing conflicts between environmental sustainability and socio-economic development (UNSDSN 2015; ICSU and ISSC 2015; Easterly 2015; Bali Swain & Yang, 2020). The measurement and impact of sustainable development become complex as these challenges are comparable to conceptual and quantification issues that are intricate.

As recognized by Scherera et al. (2018), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play a crucial role in current policy discussions and sustainable development. However, some critics, such as Des Gasper (2019), argue that the SDGs overlook several important themes, such as migration, terrorism, capital flight, and democracy. Conversely, Biggeri et al. (2019) contend that the SDGs collectively represent a roadmap for a better future that encourages action and cooperation among various actors and agents of change at different levels, allowing

for adaptation to diverse contexts and objectives, rather than merely evaluating them based on conceptual and technical dimensions.

Addressing a range of interconnected and interrelated issues, the Sustainable Development Goals employ a holistic approach. For instance, poverty alleviation cannot be achieved without improving access to education, healthcare, and better job opportunities. Climate action is also critical to ensuring that economic development does not harm the environment and remains sustainable for future generations. In this context, each SDG reinforces and supports the others, creating the necessary synergy to achieve sustainable development (Kopnina, 2020). Furthermore, the SDGs encourage all segments of society, including governments, the private sector, and civil society, to participate. Each organization plays a vital role in achieving these goals. For example, governments are responsible for creating policies and regulations that support the SDGs, while the private sector is expected to conduct business responsibly and sustainably. In turn, civil society can contribute through various programs and events that support these objectives, such as environmental awareness campaigns and community empowerment programs (Adikusuma, 2020).

However, it is undeniable that achieving the SDGs faces various significant challenges. One of the main challenges is resource limitations, whether in the form of financial, technological, or human capacity. Many developing countries struggle to allocate sufficient resources to support the achievement of the SDGs. Additionally, political instability and conflict can hinder efforts to meet these goals. Therefore, strong international cooperation and support from the global community are necessary to address these challenges (Scherera et al., 2018). Criticism of the SDGs also includes the view that some goals may be too ambitious and difficult to measure accurately. For instance, how can we accurately measure the achievement of goals like "ending poverty in all its forms everywhere" or "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all"? Some critics argue that these goals need to be more specific and measurable to provide clearer guidance for countries in their implementation (Easterly, 2015). On the other hand, the SDGs have successfully inspired numerous initiatives and programs across the globe. Many countries and organizations have adopted the SDGs as a framework for planning and implementing their development programs. For example, some countries have integrated the SDGs into their national development plans, while multinational corporations have adopted the principles of the SDGs in their business strategies. This indicates that despite the challenges, the SDGs remain an important tool for mobilizing action and global cooperation (Biggeri et al., 2019).

In the context of Indonesia, the SDGs have been integrated into the Regional Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPD) as part of efforts to ensure that development at the local level aligns with global objectives. The Indonesian government has also launched various initiatives to support the achievement of the SDGs, including programs to reduce poverty, improve education quality, and protect the environment. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done to achieve all these goals by 2030, and cooperation from all parties is essential for success. Overall, the SDGs provide a comprehensive and ambitious framework for addressing various

complex and interconnected development challenges. With support and participation from all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and civil society, these goals can be achieved to create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable world. Despite the various challenges and criticisms, the SDGs remain an important roadmap for a better future, inspiring action and cooperation at multiple levels and in various contexts.

Transformational Leadership Theory

A company without a leader will not function smoothly, as an organization or team requires someone to guide, mentor, and support them in achieving a goal. Leadership can be defined as a process of management, empowerment, and supervision that a leader applies to those they lead. This implementation is useful for enhancing human resources in achieving shared objectives. Generally, leadership personality is characterized by several processes, such as influencing, directing, controlling behavior, and emotional aspects within organizational members (Agustinus H, 2014). Transformational leadership refers to the process of building commitment towards organizational goals and instilling trust in followers to achieve those goals (Handayani et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is defined as a leader's ability to change the work environment, work motivation, work patterns, and work values applied to subordinates, allowing employees to improve and optimize their performance in achieving the goals of an organization. Transformational leadership aims to transform the values followed by subordinates in supporting the vision and mission of the organization (Cahyadi, 2021). Based on the above descriptions, it can be concluded that transformational leadership is a leadership process that brings about change through a clear vision while involving subordinates in every activity, with a charismatic attitude serving as the approach between leaders and followers.

Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate their followers through an appealing and challenging vision. They can envision the future with optimism and communicate that vision in a way that motivates others to follow. Transformational leaders are also known for their ability to encourage creativity and innovation within the organization, allowing their followers to think outside the box and seek new solutions to the challenges they face (Iswahyudi et al., 2023). One key element of transformational leadership is the strong relationship between the leader and followers. Transformational leaders focus not only on achieving organizational goals but also care about the needs and individual development of their followers. They provide personal attention, listen to concerns, and offer the necessary support to help followers reach their full potential. This creates a positive and supportive work environment, which in turn enhances employee performance and commitment to the organization (Muktamar et al., 2024).

Transformational leadership also plays a crucial role in creating an adaptive and responsive organizational culture to change. In an era of globalization and rapid technology, organizations must be able to adapt quickly to changes in the external environment. Transformational leaders help organizations remain flexible and proactive in the face of change by encouraging an open attitude toward learning and continuous improvement. They

inspire followers to keep learning and growing and to face new challenges with confidence (Iswahyudi et al., 2023). Transformational leaders are known for their ability to foster a sense of responsibility and ownership among their followers. They encourage followers to feel that they play an essential role in achieving organizational goals. By involving followers in the decision-making process and providing them opportunities to contribute significantly, transformational leaders enhance employee engagement and commitment to the organization. This positively impacts the overall productivity and performance of the organization (Daeli et al., 2024).

The context of transformational leadership can also be seen in various situations and sectors, from business and education to government. In each of these contexts, transformational leaders demonstrate the ability to bring about positive change and motivate followers to achieve shared goals. They focus not only on short-term results but also on long-term development and sustainability of the organization. Thus, transformational leadership becomes a highly relevant and effective leadership model in our ever-changing and complex world (Budiyanti et al., 2022). Overall, transformational leadership is a powerful and effective approach to leading organizations toward achieving higher goals. By emphasizing vision, motivation, and individual development, transformational leaders can create a productive and innovative work environment. Despite challenges and criticisms, transformational leadership remains one of the most influential and relevant leadership models in modern organizational contexts.

Organizational Learning Theory

The concept of organizational learning first emerged in the 1970s and is defined as the ability to recognize mistakes and correct them (Argyris in Thorvaldsen & Madsen, 2020). Organizational learning is the process by which employees can potentially influence the capabilities and behaviors of other employees by utilizing shared experiences and understanding new information developments (Charmi, 2021). This process consists of four main sub-processes: acquiring information, distributing information, sharing information, and interpreting information. The information interpreted by each individual is transformed into new common knowledge within the organization. This information gathering results in guidelines and documents that are stored for future use (Khan & Bashir, 2020).

Organizational learning provides employees with a broad and deep understanding of the organization, its goals, and fosters a sense of togetherness. This sense of togetherness cultivates a commitment to developing the organization. Organizational learning encompasses four main activities: systematically solving problems, experimenting with various new approaches, learning from their own experiences and past history, as well as from the experiences of others, and rapidly and efficiently transferring knowledge throughout the organization (Wheelen et al., 2018). This organizational learning capability positively impacts innovation and company performance (Kalmuk & Acar, 2015).

The organizations that excel in the future are those that find ways to leverage the commitment and capacity of every individual to learn at all levels within the organization (Charmi, 2021). Employee commitment to the organization is crucial for the sustainability of the production process within the company (Nababan et al., 2022). With effective organizational learning, companies can continue to innovate and enhance their performance, ensuring that they remain competitive and capable of facing emerging challenges in the future. Organizational learning focuses not only on individual improvement but also on collective enhancement, ultimately creating a strong and sustainable learning culture within the organization.

Motivation Theory

Job satisfaction, motivation, and reward systems have been central concerns in organizational theory, where these three variables are interrelated and influence each other. In this context, motivation is often seen as the most dominant variable and complements job satisfaction and reward systems (Andjarwati, 2015). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposed by Abraham H. Maslow in 1954, is one of the most well-known and widely used motivation theories. Maslow stated that to stimulate a person, it is important to understand their hierarchy of needs and focus on meeting needs at the perceived level or above. According to Maslow, there are five basic needs that motivate humans: physiological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs include basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing, which in the workplace context can be met through salary or wages. Safety and security needs encompass protection from danger and uncertainty, such as job security and property protection.

Social needs include interaction and good relationships with others, which are essential for employees' emotional well-being. Esteem needs comprise two aspects: first, the need for power, mastery, and independence, and second, the need for recognition from others, status, and appreciation. Meeting these needs in the workplace can be achieved through promotions, positions, rewards, and feedback from supervisors. Finally, self-actualization needs encompass an individual's potential to solve problems and create, allowing them to develop innovative ideas and make significant contributions to the organization. Understanding and fulfilling these needs can help organizations create a motivating and satisfying work environment for their employees, which in turn can enhance overall performance and productivity.

Employee Engagement Theory

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a concept that explains individual behavior based on the control an individual has (Bosnjak et al., 2020). This concept states that individuals who are good at self-regulation tend to exhibit good behavior as well. The main theme of TPB is the best way to predict and explain an individual's behavior through their behavioral intentions. This theory assumes that: (1) individuals tend to be rational and use information analytically when deciding to act or not to act, (2) an individual's actions are

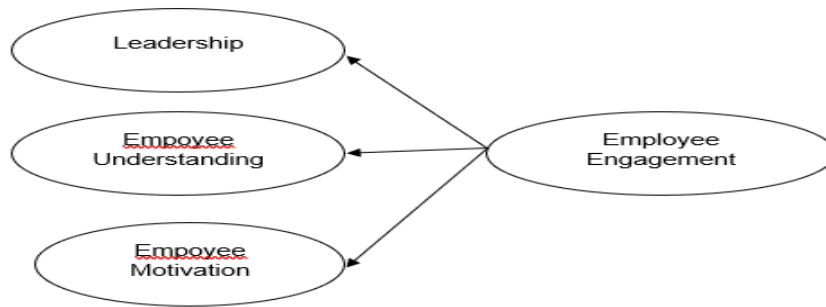
guided by conscious thoughts rather than unconscious urges, and (3) individuals consider the implications of their actions before deciding to act or not (Lai, 2017).

TPB has achieved significant success in behavioral research. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) reported that this theory is widely used to predict individuals' intentions and behaviors. Lai (2017) noted that TPB predicts intentions and behaviors quite well and is useful for identifying where and how to change an individual's behavior. Subsequent research found that there is important flexibility missing from TPB, namely perceived behavioral control. For instance, Crow and Cordasco (1972) provided empirical evidence that a person's behavior is heavily influenced by their level of self-efficacy (the belief in their ability to perform a behavior). Based on these research findings, perceived behavioral control was added to TPB, and the theory was renamed the Theory of Planned Behavior (Akmal Bostanudin & Rashid, 2021). According to this theory, the intention to behave can be referred to as a behavior only if that behavior is under the control perceived by the individual, meaning that the individual perceives themselves as having full control over the decision to engage in that behavior or not (Bosnjak et al., 2020).

For example, an individual may have a strong intention to engage in a behavior but may lack the necessary opportunities or resources (such as knowledge, skills, abilities, information, time, money, tools, and cooperation from others) to actually do so (Singelis et al., 1995). In the context of employee engagement, TPB can be applied to understand how employees' intentions towards positive work behaviors can be influenced by their perceptions of control over those actions. When employees feel that they have sufficient control and support, they are more likely to actively engage and contribute to organizational goals. Therefore, organizations need to create a supportive environment, provide adequate resources, and build employees' self-efficacy so that they feel they have control over their work and can achieve the expected performance.

Method

This research employs a quantitative design with a survey approach to explore the relationships between leadership, employees' understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and employee motivation regarding their involvement in supporting the SDGs within the Regional Device Organization (OPD). This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large number of respondents and statistically analyze the relationships between the studied variables.



Source: Researcher's elaboration, 2024

Figure 1. Research Model

The population in this study consists of all civil servants (PNS) working in OPDs involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable development programs in the region. The sample for this research was taken from several OPDs engaged in the planning and implementation of sustainable development programs across various areas. To ensure the representativeness and reliability of the data, cluster sampling techniques were used based on regions with high and low industrial activity. From each cluster, a number of employees were randomly selected to participate in this study. The use of cluster sampling allows the researcher to accommodate the existing variations in different areas and obtain a sample that reflects the actual conditions on the ground.

The expected sample size is approximately 300 respondents. This figure is determined based on practical and statistical considerations to ensure that the obtained data are sufficient for valid and reliable analysis. The sample is drawn from several OPDs in various regions, considering an even distribution between areas with high and low industrial activity so that the research results can be generalized across different contexts. In the data collection process, the research team will collaborate with the authorities in each OPD to identify and contact the employees who will be respondents. The selected respondents are expected to provide accurate and in-depth information regarding their involvement in supporting the SDGs, as well as the leadership factors, understanding of the SDGs, and motivations that influence that involvement.

The main instrument used in this research is a questionnaire designed to measure the variables of leadership, employees' understanding of the SDGs, employee motivation, and employee engagement. The leadership scale measures aspects of transformational leadership such as vision, communication, and inspiration. The scale for employees' understanding of the SDGs measures the level of knowledge and understanding of the SDGs among employees. The employee motivation scale assesses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on motivation theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory. The employee engagement scale measures the level of participation and commitment of employees in supporting SDG programs. This questionnaire will be validated in advance through validity and reliability tests to ensure that the instruments used can accurately and consistently measure the intended variables.

Before data collection, the researchers will obtain permission from the authorities in the involved OPDs, develop and pilot the questionnaire, and prepare the research team to collect data in the field. Data will be collected through questionnaires distributed to selected respondents. The questionnaire can be filled out online or offline, depending on the preferences and comfort of the respondents. The research team ensures that all questionnaires are completely and correctly filled out before data analysis is conducted. The collected data will be analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques with the aid of statistical analysis software (R). Data analysis will include descriptive tests to describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of the studied variables, reliability and validity tests to ensure that the research instruments have adequate consistency and accuracy, correlation and regression analysis to explore the relationships between leadership, employees' understanding of the SDGs, employee motivation, and employee engagement, as well as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the model of relationships between the studied variables simultaneously and evaluate the goodness of fit of the research model with the existing data.

Result and Discussion

Validity and Reliability Testing

Validity testing is conducted to ensure that each item in the questionnaire accurately measures the intended variables. This validity is assessed using the construct validity method, where the results of the factor analysis show that all items have significant loading factor values, exceeding 0.5. This indicates that these items have a strong correlation with the factors they measure. For the Leadership Variable, out of 11 items tested, 9 items are valid (X1.1 to X1.9) with the calculated "r" value greater than the "r" table value. Two items, X1.10 and X1.11, are deemed invalid due to their calculated "r" value being less than the "r" table value. The valid items indicate that most statements related to leadership have a significant correlation with the total score of the variable. This shows that these statements effectively measure the concept of leadership in the context of this research. The two invalid items may require revision or replacement to better align with the context of measuring leadership within the organization. Next, in the validity test of the Employee Understanding variable, out of 10 items tested, 6 items are valid (X2.1, X2.2, X2.3, X2.8, X2.9, X2.10). Four items, X2.4, X2.5, X2.6, and X2.7, are considered invalid. The Employee Understanding variable has several invalid items, indicating weaknesses in some statements used. This may be due to the misalignment of statements with the actual understanding being measured. Invalid items need to be reviewed in terms of both language and relevance to the concept being measured.

For the validity of the Employee Motivation variable, out of 9 items tested, 8 items are valid (X3.1 to X3.5, X3.7 to X3.9). One item, X3.6, is deemed invalid. Almost all items in the Employee Motivation variable are valid, except for one item, indicating that most statements in the questionnaire are sufficiently effective in measuring employee motivation. The invalid item may require adjustments to better reflect aspects of motivation relevant to this research.

Finally, out of 15 items tested, 13 items are valid (Y.1 to Y.10, Y.12, Y.14, Y.15). Two items, Y.11 and Y.13, are deemed invalid. Most items in the Employee Engagement variable are valid, indicating that these items effectively measure employee engagement in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The two invalid items show potential for improvement in the statements to more accurately describe employee engagement.

The invalid items were subsequently removed before further analysis was conducted. After the invalid items were deleted, reliability testing was performed. Reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the instruments used. Generally, the resulting Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are above 0.7, which is the common threshold indicating that the instrument is reliable. The leadership variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82, demonstrating that this instrument has a good level of internal consistency. Furthermore, the employee understanding and employee motivation variables show Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.78 and 0.81, respectively, indicating that the instruments used to measure these variables are also reliable.

Results of SEM Analysis

The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis reveal several important findings regarding the relationships between leadership (X1), employee understanding (X2), and employee motivation (X3) with ASN engagement (Y).

Table 1. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the Structural Equation Model

Index	Value
Chi-Square (χ^2)	1342.961
Degrees of Freedom (df)	588
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.915
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.948
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.065
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	0.073

Source: Author Processed, 2025.

The Chi-square (χ^2) value of 1342.961 with a degree of freedom (df) of 588 and a p-value of 0.000 indicates that this model does not fully fit the overall data. However, the Chi-square statistic tends to be sensitive to large sample sizes, so it is also necessary to consider other fit indices. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are valued at 0.915 and 0.948, respectively. These values indicate that the model has a good fit, as ideal CFI and TLI values should be close to or above 0.90. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.065, indicating a moderate model fit, with a 90% confidence interval between 0.061 and 0.070. This value falls within an acceptable range (< 0.08), although it is not optimal. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.073, indicating

that there are no significant standard residual errors, consistent with the criterion that an ideal SRMR value is below 0.08.

Measurement Model

The measurement model in this context aims to assess how indicators (observed variables) relate to latent variables that cannot be measured directly.

Table 2. Measurement Model Estimates for Leadership (X1), Employee Understanding (X2), Employee Motivation (X3), and Employee Engagement (Y)

Latent Variable	Indicator	Estimate	P-Value
X1	X1.1	1	0
	X1.2	0.747	0.001
	X1.3	0.913	0
	X1.4	1.575	0
	X1.5	0.389	0.038
	X1.6	1.437	0
	X1.7	0.999	0
	X1.8	0.753	0
	X1.9	1.017	0
X2	X2.1	1	0
	X2.2	1.398	0
	X2.3	0.344	0.004
	X2.8	0.275	0.026
	X2.9	0.266	0.025
	X2.10	0.081	0.496
X3	X3.1	1	
	X3.2	1.558	0
	X3.3	1.549	0
	X3.4	0.472	0.066
	X3.5	1.677	0
	X3.7	1.955	0
	X3.8	1.218	0.001
	X3.9	1.228	0.001
Y	Y.1	1	0
	Y.2	0.791	0
	Y.3	0.801	0
	Y.4	1.149	0
	Y.5	0.791	0

	Y.6	1.049	0
	Y.7	0.169	0.326
	Y.8	0.441	0.019
	Y.9	0.517	0.005
	Y.10	1.163	0
	Y.11	0.753	0
	Y.12	0.632	0.001
	Y.15	0.685	0

Source: Author Processed, 2025.

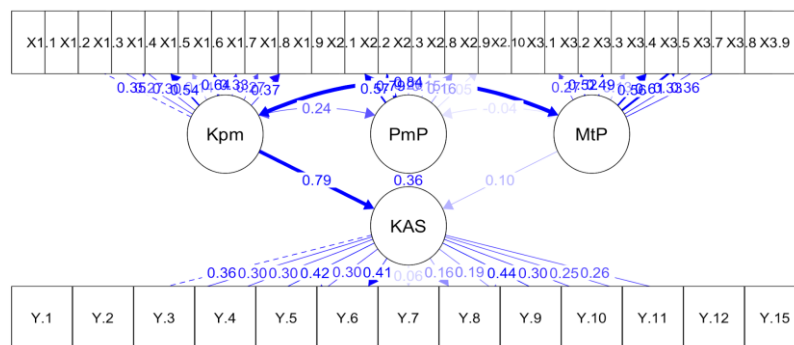
Based on the analysis results of the measurement model, indicators X1.1 to X1.9 are used to measure the latent variable X1. All indicators have positive factor loadings (estimates), with X1.4 having the highest factor loading of 1.575, indicating that this indicator has the strongest contribution to measuring the latent variable X1. The significant p-values ($P < 0.05$) for most indicators suggest that the relationships between the indicators and the latent variable X1 are significant. The indicators used to measure the latent variable of Leadership encompass various aspects of a leader's ability to motivate, direct, set an example, and receive input from subordinates. Overall, indicator X1.4, which states that "The leaders in my organization set a good example in encouraging employee participation in sustainable development efforts (SDGs)," has the highest factor loading of 1.575. This indicates that setting a good example is the greatest contribution to shaping employees' perceptions of effective leadership. Conversely, indicator X1.5, which relates to receiving directions from leaders, has a lower contribution.

For the latent variable X2, indicators X2.1 to X2.10 are used as measurements. X2.2 has the highest factor loading of 1.398, while X2.10 has the lowest factor loading of 0.081, indicating that the contributions of these indicators to the latent variable X2 vary. The p-values show that some indicators have non-significant relationships, such as X2.10 with $P > 0.05$, suggesting that further evaluation of these indicators is necessary. Employees' understanding of their tasks, responsibilities, vision, mission, and organizational procedures is measured using the indicators for the latent variable X2. Indicator X2.2, which focuses on employees' understanding of their main tasks and responsibilities, has the highest factor loading of 1.398. This indicates that a clear understanding of job responsibilities is most important for employees in assessing their understanding of the organization. The indicator with the lowest factor loading is X2.10, which focuses on internal communication, indicating that while communication is important, its impact on the perception of understanding is not as significant as a direct understanding of job responsibilities.

Indicators X3.1 to X3.9 are used to measure the latent variable X3. Among these indicators, X3.7 has the highest factor loading of 1.955, showing the greatest contribution to measuring X3. All indicators in X3 demonstrate significant relationships with the latent variable X3 ($P < 0.05$), indicating the good reliability of these indicators. Employee motivation in supporting organizational goals and achieving SDGs is measured through indicators in the

latent variable X3. Indicator X3.7, which states that "In completing tasks, employees have their own methods and authority that can be accounted for," has the highest factor loading of 1.955. This indicates that autonomy and personal responsibility in work are key motivating factors for employees. Other indicators related to recognition from the community also show significant contributions.

For the latent variable Y, indicators Y.1 to Y.15 are used as measurements. Y.10 has the highest factor loading of 1.163, indicating that Y.10 contributes the most to the latent variable Y. However, there are several indicators that have non-significant relationships with the latent variable Y, such as Y.7 ($P > 0.05$), which may indicate that this indicator is less appropriate for measuring the latent variable Y. The indicators of employee engagement, measured by the latent variable Y, encompass aspects of personal involvement and commitment to work and the organization. Indicator Y.10, which states "I have a very strong bond with my current job," has the highest factor loading of 1.163. This indicates that emotional engagement and attachment to the job are important factors in assessing how engaged employees are. However, some indicators, such as Y.7, show non-significant relationships, which may indicate that these aspects are less relevant or not strong enough in measuring overall employee engagement. The measurement model of this study is presented in Figure 2.



Source: Author Processed, 2025

Figure 2. Measurement Model

Structural Model

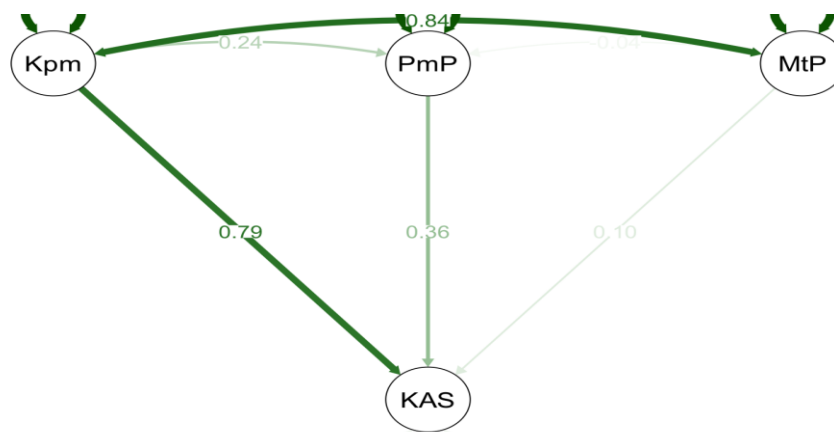
Based on the analysis of the relationships between variables, several significant findings emerged regarding the influence of independent variables on the engagement of Civil Servants (ASN).

Table 3. Structural Model Path Estimates between Exogenous Variables and ASN Engagement

Y~	Estimate	P-Value
X1	0.821	0.032
X2	0.231	0.009
X3	0.142	0.733

Source: Author Processed, 2025.

First, Leadership (X1) shows a significant influence on ASN Engagement (Y) with an estimate of 0.792 and a p-value of 0.032. This indicates that the better the quality of leadership implemented within the organization, the higher the level of ASN engagement in their work. Second, Employee Understanding (X2) also has a significant influence on ASN Engagement with an estimate of 0.356 and a p-value of 0.009. This suggests that a good understanding by employees of their tasks and responsibilities can enhance their engagement in their work. However, Employee Motivation (X3) does not show a significant influence on ASN Engagement, with an estimate of 0.104 and a p-value of 0.733. This means that in the context of this research, motivation may not be a primary factor affecting the level of ASN engagement.



Source: Author Processed, 2025

Figure 3. Structural Model

Additionally, the relationships between the exogenous variables also reveal several important findings. There is a significant positive correlation between leadership and employee understanding, with an estimate of 0.244 and a p-value of 0.017. This indicates that improvements in leadership are associated with better employee understanding. Furthermore, there is a significant positive correlation between leadership and employee motivation, with an estimate of 0.839 and a p-value of 0.001. These findings suggest that effective leadership tends to enhance employee motivation. However, no significant correlation was found between employee understanding and employee motivation, with an estimate of -0.040 and a p-value of 0.641. This indicates that, in the context of this research, employee understanding is not directly related to their motivation.

The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) indicate that leadership and employee understanding are important factors influencing ASN engagement. Leadership has the greatest influence, followed by employee understanding. In contrast, employee motivation does not show a significant influence on ASN engagement, which may indicate that other factors beyond motivation need to be considered to enhance ASN engagement. Additionally,

the model shows that it is not optimal in several fit criteria, suggesting that a more complex model or the use of additional variables may be necessary to achieve a better representation of the data. Overall, this study provides important insights into how various factors, particularly leadership and employee understanding, can contribute to enhancing ASN engagement, although there are aspects of the model that require improvement.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer both empirical validation and theoretical reflection on the determinants of ASN engagement. Leadership and employee understanding emerge as statistically significant predictors, while motivation despite its centrality in much of the behavioral literature does not demonstrate a direct significant effect in the estimated model. This pattern warrants careful interpretation rather than a simplistic conclusion regarding the irrelevance of motivation.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), motivation alone rarely operates in isolation. As highlighted in prior studies, behavioral intention and engagement are most effectively activated when motivational orientation is complemented by enabling conditions such as adequate resources, supportive environments, and perceived self-efficacy. In this sense, the present findings do not contradict TPB, but rather align with its more nuanced interpretations: motivation may function less as an independent driver and more as a contingent force whose effects are realized under specific structural and psychological conditions.

Importantly, this study does not seek to revise or critique its empirical model post hoc. Instead, the results invite a reflexive reading of the model itself. The absence of a statistically significant motivation effect suggests that, within the observed institutional context, motivational energy may be constrained by systemic factors organizational capacity, resource availability, and perceived agency that fall outside the current model's scope. Had such factors been incorporated as moderating variables, the motivational pathway might have been activated differently. This does not weaken the model; rather, it clarifies the boundary conditions under which motivation translates into engagement.

Viewed through the lens of Governance 5.0, this finding underscores a deeper insight: engagement is not merely a function of individual attitude or intention, but an emergent outcome of coherence between inner orientation and external governance conditions. Leadership and understanding matter because they shape reflexive awareness how employees interpret purpose, meaning, and their own role within the system. Motivation, when detached from enabling structures and ethical anchoring, risks becoming latent rather than operative. Thus, the results suggest that ASN engagement is best understood as a reflexive process rather than a linear behavioral response. Engagement emerges where leadership cultivates interpretive clarity, where employees understand not only what to do but why it matters, and where motivational energy is supported by institutional conditions that make purposeful action viable.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes three interrelated theoretical contributions to the literature on public-sector engagement and governance. First, it advances engagement theory by demonstrating the limits of intention-centered models when applied to complex administrative systems. While TPB remains a powerful framework, the findings suggest that its components operate within an institutional ecology. Motivation alone is insufficient unless embedded in environments that provide resources, reinforce self-efficacy, and sustain ethical meaning. This reframes engagement not as an individual psychological state, but as a system-level phenomenon shaped by structural and reflexive conditions.

Second, the study contributes to leadership theory by empirically highlighting the role of leadership as a reflexive catalyst rather than merely a motivational trigger. Leadership's significance lies not only in inspiring effort, but in shaping how employees understand their work, interpret organizational purpose, and locate themselves within a broader governance mission. This aligns with the concept of reflexive leadership, which emphasizes sense-making, ethical anchoring, and coherence between values and action.

Third, the study resonates with the Governance 5.0 and Reflexivity Spirituality Will (RSW) framework by implicitly validating the importance of inner orientation in governance outcomes. Engagement, from this perspective, is not reducible to compliance or incentive alignment. It reflects the degree of coherence between reflexive awareness (understanding), ethical-spiritual grounding (meaning and legitimacy), and purposive will (sustained action). The non-significance of motivation, rather than undermining this framework, reinforces its central claim: without coherence, motivational impulses dissipate before translating into durable engagement. By situating engagement at the intersection of cognition, leadership, and institutional context, this study extends existing theories beyond instrumental explanations and toward an ontological understanding of administrative behavior.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of this study are both practical and strategic.

First, leadership development programs in the public sector should move beyond motivational rhetoric and focus explicitly on reflexive capacity. Leaders must be equipped not only to set goals, but to cultivate shared understanding, ethical clarity, and contextual awareness among employees. Training curricula should therefore emphasize interpretive leadership, ethical reflection, and the ability to align institutional purpose with daily administrative practice. Second, engagement policies should recognize the enabling role of institutional conditions. Investments in resources, workflow clarity, and capacity-building are not peripheral supports; they are integral to activating motivational potential. Policies that emphasize motivation without addressing self-efficacy and structural feasibility risk generating frustration rather than engagement.

Third, performance management systems should be redesigned to reflect coherence rather than mere activity. Engagement indicators should capture not only participation levels

but also understanding, perceived agency, and alignment with organizational purpose. This approach aligns with Governance 5.0's emphasis on quality of governance as a function of inner outer alignment. Finally, the findings caution against over-reliance on individual-level interventions in the absence of systemic reform. ASN engagement is sustained when governance systems themselves become reflexive capable of learning, self-correction, and ethical recalibration. Policymakers should therefore view engagement not as a variable to be engineered, but as a relational outcome emerging from coherent leadership, meaningful work, and supportive institutional design.

Conclusion

The analysis results from the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) show that leadership (X1) and employee understanding (X2) are significant factors influencing ASN engagement (Y). Leadership has a strong and significant impact on ASN engagement, with an estimate of 0.821 and a p-value of 0.032, indicating that good leadership quality can enhance employee engagement. Employee understanding also significantly contributes with an estimate of 0.231 and a p-value of 0.009, indicating that a clear understanding of tasks and responsibilities is directly related to engagement. However, employee motivation (X3) does not show a significant impact on ASN engagement, with an estimate of 0.142 and a p-value of 0.733, which may indicate that motivation is not the primary factor in this context.

The measurement model shows that the contributions of the indicators to the latent variables vary, with some indicators demonstrating significant relationships while others do not. Indicators with low factor loadings or insignificant relationships need further evaluation to ensure relevance and accuracy in measuring the intended latent variables. Although the model fit shows some adequate criteria, there is room for improvement, which may require a more complex model or the addition of further variables. As a recommendation, organizations should focus on developing effective leadership and enhancing employee understanding of their tasks and responsibilities to improve ASN engagement. Employee motivation should also be further evaluated to identify other factors that may influence it. Additionally, improvements to the model are necessary to achieve a more accurate representation of the data by re-evaluating indicators that show insignificant relationships and considering additional variables or more complex models.

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