

The Effect of Service Digitization, Transformational Leadership, and Work Engagement on Employee Performance through the Mediation of Organizational Commitment at the Aceh Civil Service Agency

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the effects of service digitization, transformational leadership, and work engagement on employee performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable, at the Aceh Civil Service Agency. The population of this study consists of 127 civil servants working at the agency. A census sampling technique was employed, whereby the entire population was included as the research sample. Data were analyzed using the SEM AMOS method. The results indicate that service digitization, transformational leadership, Work Engagement, organizational commitment, and employee performance are generally in the good category. Partially, service digitization and transformational leadership have a positive and significant effect on both organizational commitment and employee performance. Meanwhile, Work Engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment but does not have a significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and is able to significantly mediate the effects of service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of organizational behavior and human resource management literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between service digitization, transformational leadership, Work Engagement, and employee performance, particularly in the public sector context

KEYWORDS: Service Digitalization, Transformational Leadership, Work Engagement, Organizational Commitment, Employee Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of technological developments such as the digitization of operations, there have been significant changes in different sectors, one of which includes the government sector. Digitalizing public services has become the main approach to improving efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in public administration. As it concerns local government, the issue of digitization becomes a central element of bureaucratic reform, which focuses on providing effective, accountable, and transparent governance that will satisfy the needs of the community. In particular, the Government of Aceh attempts to speed up the process of digitalizing public administration by introducing the Electronic-Based Government System in managing human resources.

As an agency with a strategic mandate for managing and developing the State Civil Apparatus at the At the provincial level, there have been several information technology innovations in the administration of personnel management conducted by the Aceh Civil Service Agency. These include the management of State Civil Apparatus data, the use of electronic attendance systems, transfers and promotions conducted using online systems, and assessment based on applications. The move from traditional manual management to IT-based management is a big leap towards better management of the state civil apparatus.

Under the SPBE implementation scheme, the Aceh Civil Service Agency has used various digital applications like E-Keurani, SIMANJA, SIUDIN, e-LANSAT, CAT-UDIN, SIGABUT, and national applications such as, SSCASN, and the e-Performance system of the National Civil Service Agency. All these digital applications have been created to manage real-time data, facilitate administrative processes, and provide information access for staff and leadership. As an instance, E-Keurani enjoys a robust legal backing by virtue of Aceh Governor Regulation No. 40 of 2016 that has recognized it as an integrated electronic-based State Civil Apparatus management system. Similarly, SIMANJA is governed by Aceh Governor Regulation No. 58 of 2018 as a performance evaluation system based on key performance indicators and work behaviors.

However, not all supporting applications are governed by explicit regulations, although they functionally play an important role in supporting online State Civil Apparatus services. This condition indicates that digital transformation at the Aceh Civil Service

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Agency has progressed significantly, but still requires further strengthening in terms of regulatory support, system integration, and consistency in implementation at the operational level.

The primary goal of digitalization through the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) is to establish a clean, effective, efficient, and service-oriented bureaucracy. Digitalization is expected to enhance the quality of personnel services, strengthen the integrity of the human resource management system, and accelerate the process of bureaucratic reform. In addition, accurate and integrated data-driven systems enable faster and more informed decision-making by organizational leaders.

However, the implementation of digital transformation at the Aceh Civil Service Agency has not yet been fully optimized. However, several issues remain unresolved, such as the constraints in the technical framework for some of the work units, the lack of digital proficiency amongst some of the workers, and reluctance towards the adoption of the new system from the conventional one. Moreover, application integration is also an area that requires improvement in order to enable integrated and synchronous data management.

Despite the Aceh Civil Service Agency having conducted several socialization activities, FGDs, and training on how to operate applications like E-Keurani, SIMANJA, and SIUDIN, several difficulties are still experienced during implementation. The low number of participations in using the application by the civil servants, the dependence on submitting documents manually, and the increased need for assistance demonstrate the lack of efficiency in the current training process. Thus, there is an urgent need to assess the current socialization strategies and improve the digital literacy of the State Civil Apparatus.

In particular, the performance appraisal system for the State Civil Apparatus at the Aceh Civil Service Agency has been integrated through SIMANJA and the e-performance system. This system is designed to ensure that performance evaluations are conducted in a transparent, measurable, and data-driven manner. However, data from the past two years indicate a decline in performance outcomes at both the staff and leadership levels. This decline is reflected in performance realization scores that have not met annual targets, as well as in the low consistency of periodic report updates within the system. These findings suggest that the availability of digital systems has not yet been fully supported by adequate discipline, understanding, and supervision.

The results of a pre-survey involving 30 respondents indicate that overall employee performance falls within the good category, with an average score of 3.70. However, several indicators, such as consistency in achieving targets and competency development, received relatively lower scores. These findings suggest potential issues related to motivation and self-development, which may affect long-term performance.

In addition to system-related factors, organizational commitment is also an important determinant of employee performance. Commitment reflects the level of employees' emotional attachment to and sense of responsibility toward the organization. The results of the pre-survey indicate that the average level of organizational commitment was 3.67, which can be considered relatively good; however, indicators related to recognition of work achievements received comparatively lower scores. This suggests that aspects of appreciation and recognition of employees' contributions have not been fully realized, which may weaken their emotional attachment to the organization.

On the other hand, the attendance rate of the State Civil Apparatus at the Aceh Civil Service Agency is relatively high (94%–96%); however, repeated absences and delays are still observed among some employees. The low level of involvement in training exercises and evaluations of the work done also suggests that organizational commitment has not yet been fully ingrained into the day-to-day behavior of employees. Besides showing up at work physically, organizational commitment is also shown by dedication, belonging, and contributions towards accomplishing organizational objectives.

In terms of service digitization, as yet another factor affecting employee performance, the mean score is quite high at 3.72, indicating satisfactory results. The technology itself is deemed sufficient; nevertheless, further improvements are needed in terms of employees' digital skills. This suggests that the effectiveness of service digitization is largely determined by both system readiness and human resource preparedness for changes. Earlier research by (Fitriadi et al., 2022)s, (Maulidini et al., 2025), (Sari, 2024), and (Yusuf et al., 2023) found that service digitization positively impacts efficiency, transparency, and employee performance if supported by proper training and infrastructure.

Transformational leadership is also used strategically to boost employee performance. Findings from the pre-survey analysis show an overall score of 3.73, implying a rather positive attitude towards transformational leadership. Nevertheless, the aspects of moral exemplariness and value consistency need to be improved further. Prior research conducted by (Pratama et al., 2024), confirms that transformational leadership increases employee motivation and performance.

Further, the variable Work Engagement is found to have a mean value of 3.58, which means that the category of work engagement is relatively good. Even though the employees seem to be satisfied with their duties as well as the organizational support, the indicator of work-life balance seems to receive the lowest score. The state might lead to decreased morale among workers in the future, thus decreasing productivity. It is confirmed by the research conducted by (Seprianto, 2021) and (Fahrizal et al., 2020) that Work Engagement has a positive and significant impact on the employee's performance.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that even though the variables such as service digitization, transformational leadership, Work Engagement, and organizational commitment are all in the relatively good category, some gaps exist that will be

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one of the causes for the decrease in the performance of the employees at the Aceh Civil Service Agency. Moreover, in the existing research conducted, most of them studied each of those variables individually and mostly within the private sector or the central government institution.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

The performance of employees is a measurable result from the implementation of an individual's tasks and duties inside organizations; this involves performance quality and performance quantity. Performance quality refers to accuracy, precision, and comprehensiveness, while performance quantity refers to productivity inside a certain period of time. Many researchers have proposed definitions for employee performance. For instance, (Mangkunegara, 2016) focuses on work results based on the responsibility given by the employer, (Soetrisno, 2016) stresses goal accomplishment through the application of ethical practices, and (Busro, 2018) points at aspects such as competence, motivation, environment, and training as the main determinants of employee performance. Moreover, (DeCenzo et al., 2020) argue that performance is significantly associated with contributions to organizational and economic strategies.

There are a number of determinants for employee performance, such as organizational commitment, service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement. Organizational commitment boosts employee loyalty and improves employee motivation towards high-performance levels (Dunggio, 2020). On the other hand, service digitization helps in the speed and efficiency of administrative services (Seprianto, 2021). Transformational leadership creates an atmosphere of innovation and motivation for employees by way of empowerment (Rijanti et al., 2020), Work Engagement is defined as employee dedication to their job (Seprianto, 2021).

Based on the Ministerial Regulation of PANRB Number 4 of 2019, the performance indicators of State Civil Apparatus are service quality, work productivity, regulatory adherence, dedication in performing duties, innovation and creativity, team spirit, competency development, ethics and integrity, and performance targets achievement. These performance indicators indicate that there is a need for high-quality service delivery, regulatory conformity, competence development, team spirit, and innovation for attaining organizational goals. By having a proper understanding and efficient management of these performance indicators, the State Civil Apparatus will be able to improve the quality of their performance and help achieve organizational goals at the same time.

Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment can be explained by considering the degree of psychological involvement of the employee to the organization where he/she works. The idea involves three aspects such as emotion, morality, and rationality that motivate people to be loyal towards reaching the objectives of the organization (Meyer et al., 1993); (Porter et al., 1974). A number of things play an important role in enhancing organizational commitment among them include service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement. Service digitization improves efficiency and transparency allowing employees to understand that the organization is dynamic and capable of responding effectively to change. This will increase their motivation to participate positively in achieving organizational goals Furthermore, transformational leadership encourages employees to become emotionally attached and motivated towards work through visionary actions, role modeling, and job autonomy that improve affective commitment (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 2004). Moreover, Work Engagement is another essential factor because workers who are highly engaged in their jobs are better focused on organizational objectives and have more job satisfaction, which ultimately increases their loyalty and dedication (Ćulibrk et al., 2018)

Organizational commitment indicators represent the underlying aspects of the construct. In affective commitment, important indicators include the extent to which an employee is satisfied in his/her job and relationships with coworkers and managers, as well as achieving organizational goals. Continuance commitment is evaluated based on the perceptions of job security and the cost of leaving the organization among employees, whereas normative commitment consists of ethical obligations as well as organizational culture (Meyer et al., 1993). Through proper comprehension and management of these elements, organizations will be able to increase employee commitment, thus improving efficiency and performance in the attainment of organizational objectives.

Service Digitization

Digitizing service involves the process of changing traditional services into digital based services Digitizing service means the application of information and communication technology to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and availability of service to its consumers (Lember et al., 2019); (Omar et al., 2017). With respect to public agencies, digitization involves automation of work activities, management information system, the Internet, and incorporation of technologies like big data, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing. Such a change not only makes it easier to offer services but also brings about structural, cultural, and skills transformation within the organization, making it possible to deliver faster, open, and responsive services (Verhoef et al., 2021).

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A number of factors define the success of digitalization of services. First, there should be enough information infrastructure for internet connection and functioning of necessary hardware and software. The second factor that defines digitalization is staff skills. If people have high digital skills, they will be able to work efficiently using all these facilities. Another factor is the support of leadership and proper strategy that will make sure the process of digitalization goes smoothly. Finally, supportive legislation, user-centered approach and organizational changes are essential for successful digitalization (Omar et al., 2017).

Digitization of services adds value through cost effectiveness, faster processing, better access, and customer satisfaction. Proper digitization of services makes the interaction between the service provider and the customer more feasible and realistic. It also helps make decisions faster and innovate services. Digitization increases accountability in government, increases employee productivity, and enhances adaptability to changing needs in the modern world (Omar et al., 2017); (Verhoef et al., 2021).

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leadership style entails a leadership style that aims to motivate and empower followers to fully actualize themselves in pursuit of organizational objective (M. B. M. Bass & Riggio, 2019); (Alrowwad et al., 2017). In transformational leadership, the leader not only offers guidance but also creates a conducive environment for his followers to perform effectively, offering them personalized support and assisting in their professional growth (Cahyono et al., 2020). This leadership style results in highly motivated followers who are innovative, committed, and engaged in the attainment of organizational objectives. It further plays a significant role in creating an organizational culture that promotes sustainable performance.

The transformational leadership behavior elements as described by (Cahyono et al., 2020), are usually referred to as “the 4I,” which are: (1) Idealized Influence – the leader is regarded as a good role model and source of trust; (2) Inspirational Motivation – the leader creates a vision that inspires others; (3) Intellectual Stimulation – the leader stimulates others to think and be innovative; and (4) Individualized Consideration – the leader pays attention to individual needs and helps his/her subordinates achieve personal success.

Work Engagement

Work Engagement is a motivational and positive psychological state in which employees experience enthusiasm and passion towards their jobs and become psychologically absorbed in the execution of their responsibilities (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018); (Gagné, 2014). Employees who are highly engaged tend to be energetic, committed, and totally absorbed in their responsibilities. Work engagement helps employees perceive their work as stimulating and demanding, as well as offering self-improvement possibilities. There are three key aspects to work engagement, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022). The determinants of Work Engagement are Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, Career Development Opportunities, and Work-Life Balance. Organizational Support, which refers to resources, social support, and the acknowledgment of employees' contributions, motivates employees to be more involved. Job Satisfaction, gained through job-related features, working conditions, and appreciation received, increases engagement (Gagné, 2014). Career Development Opportunities, which involve acquiring skills and knowledge through education, develop employees' self-confidence and motivate them to contribute more, whereas maintaining Work-Life Balance motivates employees to stay committed without sacrificing their personal life.

Therefore, Work Engagement is an important measure when it comes to creating outstanding performance and productivity in the organization. Engaged workers do not just show creativity and initiative; they become devoted to organizational aims. Work Engagement is a critical motivator for innovations, quality work and contributing to meeting organizational aims in general (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018); (Gagné, 2014).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Population for this study is all civil servants working at the Aceh Civil Service Agency, amounting to 127 people. In light of the fact that this population is quite small and easily available, it is used a census sampling procedure where all the elements of the population are used as subjects of the research. Census sampling is especially relevant to be used in the current research because this method of sampling enables the researchers to cover the whole population without any errors.

The data collection was carried out by interviewing all the 127 public officials using the survey form. The survey form was analyzed before being distributed to ascertain its suitability in meeting the objectives of the research. Using the census sampling approach ensures that all the variables of interest have been considered by capturing them in the responses of the employees, hence enhancing the reliability of the results. This makes the final sample size be 127 subjects which is 100% of the population under study.

4. RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION RESULTS

Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses of this study are presented in Table 1 below.

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Table 1 Regression Weight Structural Equational Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Organizational Commitment	<---	Service Digitization	0.201	0.086	2.599	0.024
Organizational Commitment	<---	Transformational Leadership	0.525	0.104	3.870	0.000
Organizational Commitment	<---	Work Engagement	0.259	0.084	2.819	0.005
Performance Employees	<---	Service Digitization	0.230	0.104	2.554	0.020
Performance Employees	<---	Transformational Leadership	0.321	0.108	3.010	0.004
Performance Employees	<---	Work Engagement	0.020	0.090	0.194	0.846
Performance Employees	<---	Organizational Commitment	0.357	0.071	3.140	0.002

Source: Primary Data Processed, (2026)

Direct Hypothesis Testing

The estimated coefficient, standard error, critical ratio (C.R.), and level of significance from the results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis shown in Table 1 were employed to determine the correlation between the variables included in the model. The study used this information to evaluate the impact of digitization of services, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement on organizational commitment and job performance in the Aceh Civil Service Agency.

As seen from the results, service digitalization makes a vital contribution towards the development of organizational commitment, with the significance level being 0.024 (< 0.05) and the coefficient being 0.201. This implies that the greater the use of technology in the provision of personnel services and management, the more the employees feel connected to and devoted to the organization. Transformational leadership also exerts great influence on organizational commitment with the significance value being 0.000 and the coefficient being 0.525. It can therefore be considered as the most influential variable when it comes to organizational commitment. Another important determinant of organizational commitment is work engagement which influences it with a p value of 0.005 and coefficient of 0.259.

Regarding the performance of employees, the impact of service digitization has been found to be positive and significant ($p = 0.020$; coefficient = 0.230), which suggests that the adoption of digital technology improves the efficiency and productivity of workers. The impact of transformational leadership on performance is also found to be significant ($p = 0.004$; coefficient = 0.321). This highlights that leaders should adopt an inspirational and supportive approach towards their subordinates to obtain better work outcomes. On the contrary, the impact of Work Engagement on employee performance is not found to be significant ($p = 0.846$; coefficient = 0.020). Finally, the impact of organizational commitment on the performance of employees has been found to be positive and significant ($p = 0.002$; coefficient = 0.357).

Mediation Hypothesis Testing

The following paragraphs give a summary of the findings on mediation hypotheses testing:

Firstly, it should be noted that the mediation analysis shows that organizational commitment acts as an intermediary in the relationships between the independent variables service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement and employee performance. According to the results of the Sobel test for the influence of service digitization, there is a value of 2.119 at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.034$. Therefore, organizational commitment mediates partially the influence of service digitization. It means that there is not only a direct influence of the mentioned variable but also indirect influence via increased organizational commitment.

Likewise, the mediation analysis for transformational leadership reveals the Sobel value of 3.562 at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.003$. It means that organizational commitment partially meditates the impact of transformational leadership as well.

On the other hand, the Sobel test for Work Engagement yields an output of 2.628 with $\alpha = 0.008$. This suggests that organizational commitment completely mediates the relationship between Work Engagement and employee performance. Therefore, the impact of Work Engagement on employee performance is entirely mediated by organizational commitment. From the above results, it can be stated that improving organizational commitment is crucial to enhancing the impact of service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement on employee performance.

5. CONCLUSION

1. Employee performance, organizational commitment, service digitization, transformational leadership, and Work Engagement at the Aceh Civil Service Agency are generally in the good category.
2. Service digitization has a direct effect on organizational commitment at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
3. Transformational leadership has a direct effect on organizational commitment at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
4. Work Engagement has a direct effect on organizational commitment at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
5. Service digitization has a direct effect on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.

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6. Transformational leadership has a direct effect on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
7. Work Engagement does not have a direct effect on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
8. Organizational commitment has a direct effect on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
9. Organizational commitment partially mediates the effect of service digitization on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
10. Organizational commitment partially mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.
11. Organizational commitment fully mediates the effect of Work Engagement on employee performance at the Aceh Civil Service Agency.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The variable on service digitization is rated the lowest by the average score of (3.71). The lowest rating was achieved in the following indicator: "The employees in this organization have adequate digital skills to use technology in public services." As such, it is evident that there is a need for organizations to boost the digital abilities of their employees by way of technology training. They should also create guides and tutorial on using digital services.
2. The transformational leadership variable was rated the lowest (3.37) on the following indicator: "Leaders encourage us to think creatively and innovatively in solving problems." It is therefore clear that the leadership needs to be trained on creative problem solving and innovation. Moreover, organizations may consider creating an atmosphere of discussions where people can exchange ideas and innovations.
3. The Work Engagement variable has the lowest average value (3.56) among all variables based on the indicator "I believe the balance between work and personal life enhances my interest in work." Therefore, there is an imperative for companies to take into account this issue and develop strategies for improving the work-life balance of their employees, including flexible working conditions, employee benefits, paid leaves, and well-being promotion.
4. The organizational commitment variable has the lowest average score (3.18) based on the indicator "I have strong responsibility towards the organization and my coworkers." It means that companies should develop strategies for enhancing their employees' commitment to work, including developing a teamwork approach, effective internal communication, and promoting exemplary leadership.
5. The employee performance variable demonstrates the lowest average score (3.51) for the following indicator: "I am capable of meeting the stipulated performance targets annually." These results indicate the need to enhance processes such as target setting, performance evaluation, and providing sufficient resources. Providing training programs on time management, conducting evaluations, and offering constructive feedback will ensure that employees continue meeting performance targets.
6. Service digitization also requires attention when it comes to infrastructural development and integrating technology into operations. It is recommended that organizations should regularly evaluate the availability of network connections, data protection, and accessibility to digital platforms. Integration of systems among departments can save on duplicate efforts and reduce mistakes in administration. Moreover, hiring a technical team will enable employees to overcome operational obstacles in their digital journey.
7. Taking into account the concept of transformational leadership, it is vital for the organization to introduce two-way feedback processes between its leaders and employees. This process can be promoted through surveys, forums of reflection about personal performance, and coaching practices. Besides, it is important to encourage the role model behavior of leaders who demonstrate high ethics and commitment to change.
8. As regards the improvement of Work Engagement in the organization, the application of non-monetary reward systems is a solution. Such programs, including forums of appreciation, public recognition of employees' achievements and involvement in advanced training, will help enhance employees' feeling of belongingness. Additionally, making decisions related to personal work activity will increase their sense of value.
9. Organizational commitment can be developed through the constant communication of strategic direction and objectives. Communication regarding the strategic vision, mission, and objectives of the company will aid in ensuring that all employees understand the role that they play in meeting these objectives. Through organizational value programs such as work culture orientation sessions, group discussions, and team building exercises, the employees will feel a sense of unity and belonging within the organization.
10. With regards to the issue of improving the performance of employees, organizations should focus on putting into place performance evaluations for the employees. This is best achieved through the setting of realistic targets, backed up by appropriate resources and proper supervision. Additionally, performance improvement may be enhanced through giving the employees constructive feedback aimed at solving problems. Performance can thus be viewed both as an output and a process.

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